

# Rising to the Occasion Kindness Prevails



Photo by Tony Sponzili

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## from the Publisher

David King

# Everybody is being so kind

On the cover, John Muir health-care workers take a moment to admire the sculpted ice “thank you” dedicated by Chisel-It Ice of Concord. Owner and sculptor Robert Chislett and crew wanted to show their appreciation for the incredible work, commitment and risk Health-care workers were enduring as they help those afflicted by COVID-19 virus. The sculpture was set up on March 31 at 5:30 am and had already begun to melt by noon. A photo of its original form is on this page. After the photo of the set up was posted on the Diablo Gazette Facebook page, it quickly went viral, at least locally. It also inspired others to display banners throughout the county with similar sentiments of gratitude for our Healthcare workers in all locations, first responders, and even employees of essential businesses.

With shelter-in-place, we have fewer Diablo Gazette’s available at pick up locations as many are closed. Instead, we increased our home delivery. So, if you are getting this copy for the first time at your home, that is why. If you would like to continue receiving it each month, send us an email, so that I can inform distribution. Email [diablogazette@gmail.com](mailto:diablogazette@gmail.com). Be sure to include your address in the email.

Last month’s edition of Diablo Gazette received quite the favorable feedback on several articles. One was the list of open restaurants in Concord that can process your takeout or delivery orders. But the most popular feedback was on Jill Hedgecock’s tip on how to make your own roll of toilet paper. (Hint: it requires cooking). It



does not sound easy and despite so many enjoying the DIY advice, no one has yet come forward to say they gave it a try.

While many businesses have experienced severe declines during the pandemic, it has been the opposite case for Claycord.com. Since March, Claycord has been averaging roughly 25,000 unique users per day, a 70% increase, according to Google analytics. Local businesses looking for new customers, especially those depending on internet to be your main point of contact, ask about Claycord’s advertising opportunities, you will be surprised how easy it is to promote yourself daily to a large local audience. Call 925-255-2123.

Thank you for reading the Diablo Gazette, stay safe, always carry your mask and hand sanitizer, and support our local businesses as much as you can.

# Regional shelter-in-place orders extended as some rules ease

The seven Bay Area Public Health Officers have extended the shelter-in-place orders through May 31 while some restrictions are eased and tools to strengthen containment of COVID-19 are put into place. These new Health Officer orders cover everyone living or working in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara as well as the City of Berkeley, an independent public health jurisdiction.

All construction activities, certain businesses that operate primarily outdoors, and some outdoor activities will be allowed to resume with specific conditions.

Thanks to the collective action Bay Area residents have taken since mid-March, Health Officials believe many saved lives have been saved and mass hospitalizations from the COVID-19 virus have been staved off. However, officials do not wish to lose this progress by prematurely lifting restrictions. There is not yet an effective treatment or cure for the disease. This initial, measured easing of some restrictions is designed to set the stage for a gradual resumption of activity and prevent rapid, exponential growth of cases that could still overwhelm local hospitals.

“We understand how challenging shelter in place is, but we are clearly seeing the benefits,” said Dr. Chris Farnitano, Health Officer of Contra Costa County. “As we ease a small number of restrictions, it’s important to remember that the virus is still in our community. Now is not the time to ease up on maintaining social distancing, wearing a face covering, and staying home whenever possible.”

### Restrictions Eased

Under the new orders, all construction projects will be allowed to resume if the project complies with safety protocols included with the order.

All real estate transactions will also now be able to resume, but with continued restrictions on open houses and limitations on in-person viewings.

Any employee allowed to return to work at a facility can also access childcare programs that are allowed to operate.

Certain outdoor businesses can also begin operating again, and people can visit those businesses to perform work or obtain goods, services, or supplies.



This includes wholesale and retail nurseries, landscapers, gardeners, and other businesses that primarily provide outdoor services but does not include restaurants, cafes or bars, regardless of whether they have outdoor seating.

Other activities that can resume under the new order include residential moves and the use of certain shared outdoor recreational facilities like skate parks, but not others that involve shared equipment or physical contact.

This order is generally consistent with the state’s shelter in place order. On any issue where the local and state orders may differ, the stricter order applies.

Health Officers are also releasing indicators that will be used to measure progress in containing the virus and ensuring we have the infrastructure in place to protect the community from COVID-19. These indicators will be critical to decisions in the coming weeks and months about when and how to ease shelter-in-place restrictions. The indicators include:

- Whether the total number of cases in the community is flat or decreasing.
- Whether the number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is flat or decreasing.
- Whether there is an adequate supply of personal protective equipment for all health care workers.
- Whether we are meeting the need for testing, especially for persons in vulnerable populations or those in high-risk settings or occupations; and
- Whether we have the capacity to investigate all COVID-19 cases and trace all their contacts, isolating those who test positive and quarantining the people who may have been exposed.

This global pandemic of COVID-19 is still in its early stages. The virus spreads easily, testing capacity is limited and

expanding slowly, and vaccine development is just beginning. Officials expect to be responding to COVID-19 in our communities for a long time. As effective as efforts have been, Officials fear moving too fast to ease restrictions, the potential of exponential spread could have grave impacts to health and wellness to residents as well as the economy.

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**the concordian**  
by Edi Birsan, [EdiBirsan@gmail.com](mailto:EdiBirsan@gmail.com)

# Pandemic, Power and Overreach

Faced with the prospects of widespread infection and death Health Science Officials along with your elected bodies moved to a drastic Shelter-In-Place (SIP) that has not been seen in this country since the 1918-19 Spanish Flu. The Bay Area led the nation in the lockdown. As such we are also bearing the economic costs affiliated with that. Now those of us in office are starting to receive national template letters and seeing demonstrations cheered on by our President's tweets that:

1. the science behind the fears are fake science
2. the media has made this far worse than it is
3. SIP violates our constitutional rights and is gross government overreach

While these arguments will fall on the DEAD ears of 60,000 Americans and counting, we might take a look at each of these.

It is a certain likelihood that morbidity rates are inflated when comparing the current death toll to tested cases since access to testing has been restricted. Of course, that is not much consolation to the over 100,000 minimum family and friends of the dead that feel sorrow and loss. When we get more testing of people at large, we may have a better idea of both the morbidity and the extent of this disease which currently has no instant cure or vaccine.

There's great irony to hear the cries of "fake science" coming from our Politician-in-Chief while espousing untested and even absurd ideas. Meanwhile, our local leaders are working within an educated framework of decades of dedicated health professionals and those that have a sense of what was done in the past in similar pandemics to try to mitigate the destruction.

The media has reported what it sees though some of the more tied-to-political toe kissing (being polite here) embracing visual and oral platforms that clearly demonstrate their "toadiness" to the various political orders.

As for the constitutional rights, in times of great danger, there is always a great danger of losing sight of the balance needed in our American Values without getting in a position that leads to great damage.

We have freedom of assembly, but regardless of the affiliation, no group, no matter how nefarious or innocuous, is going to have a parade anytime they want down your residential street, unless at first obtaining a parade permit.

You have freedom of speech, but every other week, I get a complaint from a neighbor who really does think that you do not have that right at 2 AM, screaming at your front door because your spouse locked your drunken mess out of the house.

We have freedom of the press, yet do not try to put the visual representation of numerous sex acts on the front pages of the morning paper or even use seven particular words on the public radio waves to describe them or various other human aspects.

The first holder of that balance is your elected officials, many of which, like me are very weary of overstep and the need for balance. I want cameras on our police but not on every street. We want transparency in records, but I do not want license plate scanners to be feed into mega data records in Utah or the FBI. Know that we are aware of the dangers, that we too are the ones at great risk with you of both the disease and the damages in dealing with it. Behind us are you all and we are aware of the fears of government. For some, like me, it is one of the reason we went into government in the first place.

So be assured, we hear your concerns, we know the fears, we are discerning of the balance and you are not alone. We ALL are in this together and we shall prevail and be stronger, wiser and better for the experiences of it all.

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A family carries signs as they walk towards a protest in spite of shelter-in-place rules still being in effect at California's state capitol building in Sacramento, California on April 20, 2020. (Photo by JOSH EDELSON/AFP via Getty Images)



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by Elaine Schroth, CEO & President

## Why Tourism Matters

It's probably fair to say that most people don't realize how much tourism directly impacts our local economy. Whether travel is business, leisure, family/friends, sports or events-driven, every person who comes to Concord contributes to the city's economic vitality through dollars spent on dining, lodging, transportation, shopping and entertainment.

While some may not have thought of Concord as a typical tourist destination, in truth, we are fast becoming a first choice for both business and leisure travelers seeking a different kind of Bay Area experience. At first glance, visitors may be drawn to our sunny climate and convenient location, but the unexpected lure of a charming, historic downtown, buzzworthy local food scene, premium shopping, live music venues, epic outdoor recreation and variety of hotels, always brings them back for more.

Ultimately, Concord tourism not only creates jobs, it improves our quality of life here. According to a California Visitor impact study by Dean Runyan and Associates, over the past five years (2014-2018) the city's tourism revenue has increased by 37.5% (\$64 to \$88 million), and tourism-related jobs grew 11% from 1,890 to 2,100. More than \$17 million in state and local tax revenue from tourism dollars went to help fund



things like regional parks, economic development, arts and culture, education, roads, public safety, education, affordable housing, workforce development and other community programs. Without these travel-generated tax revenues, each Concord residence would have to pay an average of \$370 more in taxes each year

to maintain the same level of public services\*.

Concord's new Visitor Center, set to open this year, also promises to have a positive economic impact for the city through an enhanced

downtown presence and more collaborative engagement with our many partners. It is important to note that Visit Concord and the Visitor Center are self-funded through the 3% TID assessment tax, paid entirely by hotel guests (not the hotels themselves.) Hotel revenue in Concord totaled \$45 million in 2019.

Like every place else, Concord's tourism has taken a hit this year and we are not out of the woods yet. But what we do know is that the situation is temporary, and we will rebound. Now more than ever, destination marketing is essential to Concord's long-term economic health and we must continue to look and act forward, as always.



**concord mayor**

by Tim McGallian, Email: Put MAYOR in subject line [CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org)

## City of Concord providing relief resources online

Over the past few weeks we have heard a lot of information from federal leaders, Governor Newsom, and our own Contra Costa County Health officer, who are all trying to determine what's next in the fight against the coronavirus and for our economic recovery. While some communities may be attempting to open up as quickly as possible, we must all be cautious in the coming weeks and months so we don't lose ground, and that means we must take a slower approach.

I want to thank everyone for continuing to do their part -- the essential workers, those working or studying from home, and the volunteers in our community who are supporting our neighbors. To those individuals and families who are experiencing hardship, I want you to know that my team on the City Council and I, along with City staff and community partners are doing everything we can to help fill needs where they exist, and to give you the resources that are necessary to be resilient during this unprecedented time. We are all committed to making sure the information you need is available.

The City of Concord has established multiple initiatives that can all be found at [www.CityofConcord.org](http://www.CityofConcord.org) and <https://www.concordfirst.com/concord-forward/>

**ConcordCares Program:** Senior Emergency Food and Senior Helping Hands Program: Visit <https://concord.neighborexpress.org/>

**ConcordEats:** Concord's Take Out and Delivery list of open restaurants: <https://www.visitconcordca.com/concord-restaurants-togo-and-delivery->

options/

**Unsheltered hotel and food program:** If you are interested in making a donation to this program please visit [www.Concordcf.org](http://www.Concordcf.org)

**Virtual Permit Center:** <https://permitpal.cityofconcord.org/>

**Concord Essential Business List:** go here to view a list of all open essential Concord business establishments: <https://www.concordfirst.com/concord-forward/essential-business-list/>

**Business License Relief Program:** <https://www.concordfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/Business-License-Relief-Program-FAQs.pdf>

**Concord Residential and Commercial Eviction Moratorium:** <https://cityofconcord.org/DocumentCenter/View/4355/Moratorium-Flyer-Final-3-31-20>

To help keep the community informed during the pandemic and our recovery, I'm hosting a weekly town hall meeting every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. You can join me through Zoom or simply watch on Facebook Live. You can get more information and watch past episodes through the links that are posted at [www.cityofconcord.org/mayor](http://www.cityofconcord.org/mayor).

The City has also started sending out a weekly e-newsletter that is focused on our response to the coronavirus. To see past issues and sign up to receive the newsletter, please visit: <http://cityofconcord.org/498/News>

May you and your family continue to stay safe and healthy.



**Jennifer Stojanovich**

Realtor, Better Homes Realty

## Researching a Home Online

If you're like most homebuyers, then you'll probably begin your home search online. But did you know that you could go beyond just the listings to learn more about a home? With so much information at your fingertips, it can be tough to know where to start. Let's take a look at some of the best ways that you can research a home online.

Learn about previous owners. If you want to know more about a home's previous owners, then you can search public records. Start by visiting the website Public Records Online Directory to get connected to your state's website. You'll also find information about your local Tax Assessor's and Recorder's offices. It's possible to find information about previous owners, property deeds, lawsuits, and any encumbrances on the house. You may also be able to search your local public library for information about the home's architect or contractor.

Discover the architectural style. Not sure if the home is mid-century modern, ranch, or something else? Learning more about the architectural style of the home can give you valuable clues about when it was built. Sometimes it can be a challenge to identify exactly what style the home is. If you don't have much experience with home design, check out [www.DIYNetwork.com](http://www.DIYNetwork.com) and compare slides of many types of architectural styles. By comparing the house to these examples, you'll gain a better understanding of the home you're researching.

Find information that is not disclosed. While home sellers are required to make certain disclosures about a home, there are some details they are not always legally required to share. This could in-

clude whether or not there have been any deaths in the home. If the home has been the site of a death, it could potentially decrease its value. This is an important piece of information to have as a buyer. You can research an address at [www.diedinahouse.com](http://www.diedinahouse.com) to find out whether or not there have been any deaths in the home. You may also discover other types of incidents such as whether there has been a fire or if any illegal drug activity has taken place.

Explore the history. If your home has a historical pedigree, then you can also research its history online. Whatwas-there.com is a website that links Google Maps to historical photos. You can see how the street where the home is located looked in the past. If you're lucky, you may even be able to see historical photos of the home itself. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is also a great place to find historical land and genealogical records. [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov). This database contains more than 10 million land records including land patents, farm ownership records, and land case entries.

Talk to an expert. While there is so much you can learn from researching a home online, you will find out even more when you talk to a professional real estate agent. Expert agents can give you invaluable information about not only a house, but also the neighborhood, school district, and local market. and help ensure that you find the home that's just right for you!

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# Concord concerts coming to a couch near you



With a loss of countless outdoor concerts due to COVID-19, a growing network of local, independent musicians launched a virtual biweekly concert called Concord Couch Concerts (CCC).

Concord Couch Concerts is a biweekly music series dedicated to bringing music to the people of Concord and neighboring communities. Each Concord Couch Concert event is a 1.5 to 2-hour musical extravaganza of sorts with 9-12 musicians each performing for approximately 10-minutes from their own home.

The premier event entitled "Concord Couch Concerts, Episode 1" debuted on Friday at 8 pm, May 1, on Facebook Live. It was a fundraising effort for the recently established Concord Community Foundations (CCF), a subsidiary of Todos Santos Business Association Arts Foundation. Concord Couch Concerts founder Dave Hughes has assembled the team of musicians along with volunteer organizers.

"Concord's incredible music scene is unfortunately the city's best kept secret. Most people who live here are familiar with the rich music history and culture of our city, but simply are not aware of some of the active talent here and the exciting energy around it. There is an abundance of bands, songwriters, performers, and recording artists right here in our backyard. Shelter-in-

place affords us a unique opportunity to showcase that talent, and to bring everything to the audience, in their homes across Concord and beyond," Hughes states in his press release.

Concord musicians record video performances from their home which are then compiled into a virtual music festival to be streamed Bi-Weekly as the Concord Couch Concerts.

"We are hoping to not only create more exposure for these artists - many of whom are currently out of work - but to

also help with the citywide effort to raise

funds to help Concord's most vulnerable folks. After talking with Mayor McGallian last week, we decided supporting CCF was the right thing to do." - Dave Hughes, CCC founder Concord Couch Concerts stated. The performance raised over \$1200.

CCC launched a Facebook page at [facebook.com/ConcordCouchConcerts](https://facebook.com/ConcordCouchConcerts) which in five days amassed over 960 members at the time of this writing. The line-up for Friday's virtual concert included performers from local groups The Breedloves, Radiokeys, the UnOriginals, Sabertooth Unicorn, Painted Wind, My Evergreen Soul, and more. For a complete line up list, visit CCC's new Facebook page titled "Concord Couch Concerts".

If you would like more information on this event, the concert series, or others involved, contact Dave Hughes via email at [mrdavehughes@gmail.com](mailto:mrdavehughes@gmail.com). There is also a 10-minute presentation posted on the CCC group page listed above.

Hughes promises, "We will strive to provide you with a tasteful variety of quality musical stylings from our couch to yours to extend our shared community into your homes."



Xavier Guerrero



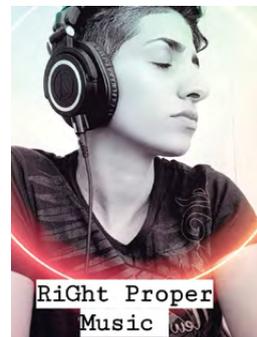
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## CVCHS honors students with commitment parade

Each Spring on May 1st, high school seniors around the country commit to their next steps after 12th grade. Due to the shelter in place, this year Clayton Valley Charter High School improvised the occasion by recognizing students and families with a "drive-thru" parade on the school campus. Seniors decorated their cars in their college colors and swag whether they were going on to four-year universities, two-year colleges, the military, trade schools, apprenticeships, and the workforce - and we want to celebrate them all.

As the students entered their parade at their predetermined time of arrival, they were greeted with a wall of photos of all their graduating senior classmates, masked teachers holding congratulatory signs, a staging area for announcing your future on livestream, and the received their cap and gown for upcoming the graduation ceremony still in planning stage.

CVCHS worked with the Contra Costa Health Services and County Office of Education to ensure proper social distancing protocols were followed for all students and staff participating in the event. (photos courtesy Amy Callahan and Laura Muller)





## Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

# Graham

Graham is an approximately 14-year-old, 12 pound, chihuahua mix. He was adopted years ago from the same shelter where he landed recently as an unclaimed stray. Graham is:

- a total lap dog
- good with other dogs and older kids
- not good with cats
- loves to go on walks
- a kind-hearted boy that loves hugs, kisses, and snuggling
- fearful, yet adventurous

Graham is being fostered by Tails of Gray, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Clayton. They offer a safe and loving sanctuary for senior dogs regardless of breed, health or ease of placement. The \$200 adoption fee for Graham helps cover vaccinations, spay/neuter surgeries, microchipping, and medical/health expenses incurred while readying him for adoption. To adopt, fill out the on-line application at: <http://www.tailsofgray.org/adoption-application-1.html>. You can also support Tails of Gray by buying their dog art



(<http://www.tailsofgray.org/dog-art.html>).

**Pawsitive News:** Dogs have the ability to smell odors in the part per trillion range, essentially one drop in an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Canines are already used to diagnose twelve different medical conditions, including malaria, low blood sugar and several types of cancer. Now, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has embarked on a project to train canines to detect symptom-free people carrying the COVID-19 virus. If successful, the dogs could be put into use in Britain by summer. This is an important first step to reining in the spread of this pandemic.

Hats off to our military and homeland security bomb detection dogs. Specially-trained dogs can alert their handlers to a wide variety of explosive ingredients, including commercial, military, and improvised explosive devices. While American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan can find about 50% of the improvised explosive devices, bomb-sniffing dogs locate about 80% of the devices.

No more rabies? The World Health Organization's goal is to stop human rabies deaths due to dog bites by 2030. Researcher Jonathan Yoder, Washington State University, who evaluated rabies cases in underdeveloped countries, found a combination of dog

vaccinations, heightened public awareness, and treatment access to be successful in reducing rabies related deaths.

Great news! Both March's and April's Ruby\_dooby\_do column featured dogs, three-legged Holly and sweet one-eyed Dolly, have both been adopted. Holly has a new sibling brother.



**A Bone to Pick.** IcelandicPlus LLC of Ft. Washington, PA recalled its Capelin Dog and Cat Treats because some of the fish exceeded FDA guidelines for fish larger than 5 inches which has the potential to cause botulism poisoning. To stay informed of future recalls, sign up for alerts at <https://dogfood.guide/recalls/>.

A tiger with a respiratory illness at a zoo in New York City tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 in the United States. Public health officials believe these large cats became sick after being exposed to a zoo employee who was actively shedding the virus. However, according to the Center for Disease Control and Transmission, there is no evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to people.

Most people don't have a disaster-preparedness plan for their pets. What happens to Fido if you and your love ones become too sick? The Humane Society recommends these steps be taken:

- Identify a family member or friend who can care for your pets
- Have crates, food and extra supplies on hand for movement and relocation of pets if necessary.
- Keep all animal vaccines up to date and have copies of those records available in the event that boarding becomes necessary.
- Ensure that all medications are documented with dosages and administering directions. It's a good idea to include the prescription from your veterinarian with the medications and your pet's to-go bag.
- Pets should have proper identification: a collar with ID tag and a microchip with current, up-to date contact information.

[Ruby Doobie Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 126,000 followers. [Instagram.com/rubydooby\\_Do](https://www.instagram.com/rubydooby_do). Column written by Jill Hedgecock, author of *Between Shadow's Eyes*, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club, [www.jillhedgecock.com](http://www.jillhedgecock.com).]

## “Empty the Shelters” May 9-17

### Adoption fees reduced to \$25

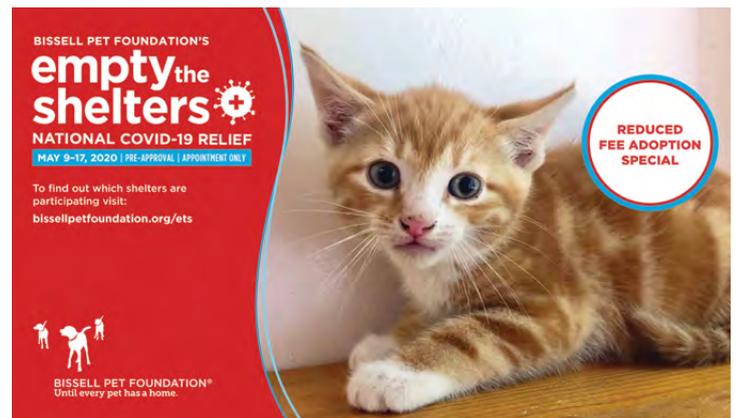
If there's a silver lining in the wake of the pandemic, it's the increase in adoptions and foster families stepping up to take a pet into their home at a time when it's needed the most. After successfully finding forever homes for 3,325 pets in the past month, BISSELL Pet Foundation is aiming to Empty the Shelters across the country, by appointment only, starting Saturday, May 9 through Sunday, May 17 with a \$25 adoption special. You can adopt a pet from one of the participating organizations for \$25 and BPF will sponsor the remainder of the adoption fee. In addition, for one week following the “Empty the Shelters” promotion, BPF will also cover the same cost for new foster families who decide to adopt their pets. All adoptions will be facilitated by appointment only to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Shelters are struggling with decreased foot traffic and fewer available staff and volunteers to care for their animals. As vulnerable populations become ill, pets inevitably will be surrendered by owners who can no longer care for them. The combined impact is devastating for those trying to keep pets alive. BPF is encouraging prospective pet parents to consider adopting from their local shelter or rescue first. Adoptable pets can be found on shelters' web-

sites and Facebook pages. Once an online application is submitted for a pet, shelter staff will work with potential adopters to schedule an in-person appointment with social distancing in mind.

“As a foundation, we pivoted quickly to help ensure adoptions continue,” said Cathy Bissell, Founder of BISSELL Pet Foundation. “I am extremely proud of our incredible shelter partners who are adapting to this new norm of virtual visits, online paperwork and adoptions facilitated by appointment only.”

Over 120 organizations in 32 states are participating. Those within and near Contra Costa County include Antioch Animal Services, Napa County Animal Shelter, Oakland Animal Services, Solano County Animal Shelter in Fairfield. For more information, or to view all participating locations, visit [www.bissellpetfoundation.org/ets](http://www.bissellpetfoundation.org/ets).

BISSELL Pet Foundation is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to help reduce the number of animals in shelters through pet adoption, spay/neuter programs, microchipping and emergency support.



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by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

### Webcam - From See to Shining See

Oh, all right, the adage is “Sea to Shining Sea,” but I am not talking about the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. I am talking about social media. The people you converse and work with want to see your mug, your smiling face. They want to see you. The explosion of home workers is causing many of you to put your mug, face, façade, and appearance online, and you do that with a web camera.

The webcam has made conversing with associates, employees, friends, and family much more interesting, personal, and tolerable. Your face displays expressions that words alone cannot replicate or express. It’s no wonder everyone wants a webcam.

A webcam is the little internal camera built into your laptop, tablet, or smartphone so there is no need to purchase one if you have these devices. You could purchase an external webcam if the image is not good enough, or if the camera angle is not useful, i.e. doesn’t tilt (bend) for your purpose. By the way, webcam is also known as just “cam.”

If you need a webcam or a cam upgrade, it is simple to buy and install one. Here are some features you should know. One could simply jump on the Internet and order a cam from known names like Microsoft or Logitech but what about names you have never encountered like, Corn, Blue, Eeekit and others? If you want to shell out big bucks, then the known name companies are okay to use. Otherwise pay attention to some important features and skip the name game.

First is resolution, next are image view and price. There are two competing types of resolution and view. Resolution is defined as “p” and those that are defined as pixels. View is defined as standard and

wide.

A 720p or 1080p refers more to your view from TV/monitors. Those that use the term pixels or mega-pixels are less expensive and have a squarish view (standard shape) vs. wide screen. The “p” types that are usually better, have a wide angle and create a sharp image but are expensive. The pixel method is adequate for general use in programs like Skype, Zoom, Facebook and other popular collaboration software (Internet group activity). The 1080p types are excellent at everything and create a wide view (frame).

A pixel camera should have a minimum 640 x 480 resolution to have a near sharp image. The popular pixel base of 640 x 480 or 1024 x 768 for a sharper image will create a squarish view (frame) on your monitor.

All cams should be USB compatible and have a built-in microphone (mic). Either USB 2.0 or USB 3.0 are acceptable.

Name brands sell for about \$100.00 and up and the generic cams are \$100.00 and below. During the current work at home lockdowns, getting ANY cam can be a challenge. Be aware Walmart, Best Buy, Amazon, and other big retailers say they have cams in stock – but they don’t. Watch carefully from where the camera is shipped. If it says, “in stock and shipped from China”, you will have a long, long, wait. They do mean shipped from China and not their local warehouse. You should get your order in about eight weeks. Good luck.

Best solution, if you need a webcam and are not too concerned about features and you want to “see to shining see,” grab it.

Call me.

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## NEWS & TALK

### In case you missed it...

#### The rattlesnakes are out

As more people take to trails to get out of the house, we are getting many reports of rattlesnake sightings from several trails and neighborhoods.

If you’re out hiking, biking, jogging or just enjoying the outdoors, always remember to keep an eye on your surroundings, and don’t let your dogs off leash (if dogs are permitted). If you see a rattlesnake, by all means, engage social distancing with it.



rattlesnake spotted in Walnut Creek’s Shell Ridge Open Space. Photo by Gary Lawhon, courtesy of Claycord.com

#### State of California announces meals program for seniors.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and restaurants across the state to provide and deliver healthy meals to seniors during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Restaurants and other businesses in the state’s hospitality industry will provide three meals per day to qualifying seniors, enabling them to hire, retain and pay workers despite shuttering for normal business due to shelter-in-place orders.

FEMA will partially reimburse up to \$16 for breakfast, \$17 for lunch and \$28 for dinner for each senior in the meal delivery program, allowing a significant portion of the state’s 5.7 million seniors and 1.2 million seniors that live alone to eat healthy meals consistently.

To qualify for the meal delivery program, seniors must be at high risk of contracting the coronavirus, must have an income of 600% of the federal poverty line or about \$76,500 a year, must have already been exposed to the coronavirus, or must have a compromised immune system. Eligible seniors can contact their local 211 call center or visit COVID19.ca.gov to sign up for the program.

#### Concord Council approves salary cuts for city officials.

The Concord City Council took small steps to save money by cutting their own salaries, and those of top city managers in the April 14 City Council meeting.

By a 5-0 vote, council members voted to slash their own pay by 10 percent, from \$1,352 per month to \$1,216.80. The council also voted to cut by 5 percent the salaries of top city executives, including City Manager Valerie Barone, City Attorney Susanne Brown and police Chief Mark Bustillos, as well as other executive management employees, non-sworn managers and confidential employees. The salary cuts combined with scheduled furloughs and 401(k) contribution cuts would amount to an approximate 9 percent cut in overall compensation through June 2021, a city report says.

City sales tax revenue is expected to drop up to 22 percent by June, and by 32 percent by June 2021.

The city is aiming for a 20 percent reserve by June 2021, which will require between \$11 million and \$24 million in

either cuts or in new revenue sources.

Barone told the council that without significant outside help – perhaps some direct payments from a second massive federal aid package, which are far from certain – the city may well have to make unpopular service cuts before the end of June.

#### “Contact Tracing” efforts growing in Contra Costa County to help stop spread of Coronavirus

Alameda and Contra Costa counties are assembling teams of “contact tracing” workers to help identify people who’ve come in contact with confirmed novel coronavirus patients.

Contact tracing is the process of identifying people who may have come into contact with an infected person and learning more about those contacts. The goal is to test those contacts for coronavirus infection, and treat and isolate them if necessary, thus helping stem the virus’ spread.

Contact tracing has become more important because coronavirus testing has been inconsistent. It’s assumed many more people harbor the virus than have been confirmed.

“For every known positive-testing patient there are probably 20 to 30 others going untested,” Dr. Ori Tzvieli, deputy public health officer for Contra Costa County Tzvieli said. “It’s probably in the tens of thousands who potentially have the virus in Contra Costa County.”

Without testing everyone, there’s no real way to know how many people have the virus, especially since anywhere from 25 to 50 percent of virus carriers don’t show symptoms.

#### Help the grocery store workers, return your cart to the cart corral.

Grocery store workers are having a tough time of it lately, so let’s do all we can to help them out by putting the carts back in the cart corral when you’re done using them.

Not only does it save them time, but it also decreases the chances of a loose cart damaging a vehicle in the parking lot. Also, please don’t leave used gloves, masks, wipes, etc. in the cart, that’s just gross.

#### State announces initiative to connect excess produce to Food Banks

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a state and federal initiative to connect farmers and ranchers with excess produce to food banks around the state.

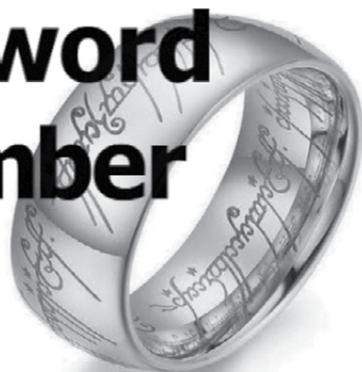
According to Newsom, food banks have seen a 73 percent increase in demand since the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic began, while farmers and ranchers have seen demand for their crops and other food fall by half.

With supply chains of perishable food to shuttered restaurants fractured during the pandemic, produce and other food could end up being thrown away if action wasn’t taken, Newsom said.

The partnership currently includes nearly 130 farmers and ranchers who are providing food commodities to 41 food banks in 58 counties. State officials hope to extend the program through the end of the year, providing roughly 21 million pounds of food to local food banks every month.

The state has already raised \$3.6 million in philanthropic funding for the program, with a goal of raising some \$15 million more to help feed families in need and pay farm workers, who will also receive a 15 percent tax credit through the program.

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# DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

## WATER AWARENESS YOUTH ART CONTEST

WIN \$50 12 WINNERS!



2019 contest winner

### DETAILS

[ccwater.com/calendarcontest](http://ccwater.com/calendarcontest)



# Water Awareness Youth Art Calendar Contest

Here's a fun project for the kids if they're getting bored with being sheltered in place. Have them enter the Contra Costa Water District youth art calendar contest. There will be 12 winners, one for each month. They are looking for art that best illustrate the importance of water in your life. Winning entries will be published for the 2021 calendar. The 12 winners will also each win \$50 gift card.

**HEY KIDS!** Challenge yourself to learn about your public drinking water system. The best entries will be those that that illustrate:

- How you and your family use tap water
- How your community uses tap water
- How you use tap water efficiently
- Where your tap water comes from
- How your tap water is treated

**THINK ABOUT IT...** How would your life be different without tap water?

### WATER FACTS

Did you know that Contra Costa Water District provides water for more than 500,000 people? On average, we treat nearly 40 million gallons of water per day to be used for drinking and washing, growing lawns and food, filling swimming pools and putting out fires.

Here are some some water facts to help you get those creative ideas flowing for your calendar entry.

- Tap water costs about a penny per gallon.
- Tap water is required to meet strict health requirements to ensure it is clean and safe to drink.
- About half of all residential water use is outdoors.

You can get more fun water facts at the Contra Costa WEP Water Resource Corner Online. Go to <https://www.cewater.com/568/WEP-Resource-Corner>

### CONTEST RULES

The contest is open to children ages 8 to 18 years who reside in the Contra Costa Water District service area, which includes Antioch, Bay Point, Brentwood, Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Martinez, Oakley, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Port Costa and Walnut Creek.

- Entries must include the child's name, age, address, a parent or guardian's name, email address, and a phone number.
- Entries must be drawn by children. Please, no help from parents, adults or older siblings.
- Entries must be drawn horizontally on a single 8.5-inch by 11-inch piece of paper.
- Entries must be hand drawn. Acceptable mediums include pen, pencil, crayon, chalk, charcoal, marker, paint, or watercolor.
- If your entry is selected as a winner, you grant Contra Costa Water District a royalty-free, nonexclusive right, in perpetuity, to:
  - Use the artwork in its calendar and other print publications.
  - Use the artwork in its internal and external communications, including, but not limited to, websites, advertising, presentations, and printed and digital materials.
  - Use, in connection with the contest, the artist's first name, city of residence and age. Winning artwork will be credited in the calendar with the artist's first name and city.
  - Retain a digital copy of the artwork.
  - Entries must not include trademarked or copyrighted materials.
  - Entries must not promote the use of bottled water.
- **Entries will only be accepted between 8 a.m. March 16, 2020, and 5 p.m. May 31, 2020.**

### PRIZES

Each winning entry receives a \$50 gift card to an art supply store; your original artwork framed with a certificate of appreciation; and a printed calendar.

Prizes will be awarded at a Board

of Directors meeting in the fall, when calendars are printed.

Winning entries will be announced in June.

### HOW TO ENTER

Submit your original artwork on a single, horizontal 8.5-inch by 11-inch piece of paper. Submit by mail or in person the original, unfolded artwork to:

CCWD Calendar Contest 1331 Concord Avenue Concord, CA 94520

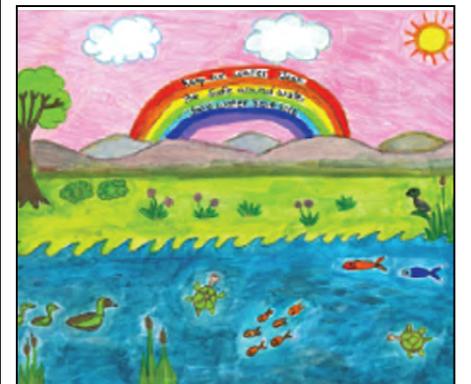
Entries must include a separate sheet of paper that lists the child's name, age, address, a parent or guardian's name, email address, and a phone number. This allows us to contact you regarding your submission. Digital reproductions of original artwork will not be accepted.

Contra Costa Water District will screen all entries based on message, merit, creativity and originality.

Finalist entries will be posted online for voting. Contra Costa Water District, with community input, will select 12 winning entries.

For more information about this contest, visit [ccwater.com/calendarcontest](http://ccwater.com/calendarcontest).

### Previous Calendar Winners



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

### AMERICANS

- BRAVE
- KIND
- COURAGOUS
- FAMILY
- LOVE
- HOPE
- TOGETHER
- SUPPORT
- CREATIVE
- STRONG
- EMPATHY



### GARDENING

- WALK
- TALK
- CLEAN
- PLAY
- COOK
- LAUGH
- NETFLIX
- INSTAGRAM
- NEWS
- BE
- SILLY



### EAT

- NAP
- STAY
- WELL



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## David George THE NAKED GARDENER

### A Mother's Gift

My mother loved her garden. She fawned over our stately avocado tree, gathered oranges and lemons during the winter months, and grew a variety of summertime veggies in neat raised beds. Growing up during the Great Depression then raising her family's food in a Victory Garden during World War II taught her that sometimes the only food available came from your own garden.

Mother recruited my efforts early on for help with pulling weeds, preparing beds for planting, and harvesting the delicious fruits of her labors. Perhaps her most long lasting gift was teaching me the joys and rewards of cultivating a garden. In these troubling times we are now experiencing, my sheltering-in-place is not a problem for me. I just walk out my back door, grab my planting spade, and get to work caring for my vegetable seedlings that will produce fresh, organic produce by summer.

Sitting around the house? No fresh produce available in the grocery market? Tired of macaroni and cheese? There has never been a better time to grow your own food than in these "Great Lockdown" times. May is the perfect month to plant tomatoes, sweet or hot peppers, squashes, melons, cucumbers, and beans.

You may have already cleared a plot in your back yard or installed raised beds. But a sunny patch on your patio is great for tomatoes in pots and you can grow delicious herbs in window boxes. Just work your homemade compost or store-bought organic planting mix into the soil then plant your little darlings. Regular light watering helps the seedlings establish good root systems to support vigorous growth once our days turn



Trellised sugar snap peas

hotter. Automate the watering process with a drip irrigation system on a timer, or just water by hand for 5-7 minutes every other day during hot weather.



Watering newly planted summer vegetables



Tomatoes, peppers and squash seedlings ready to plant.

I have heard complaints that Contra Costa garden centers are not open during the lockdown, but this is not true. Home Depot, Orchard Nursery, Sloat's and others accept phone or online orders and provide for customer pick up in their parking lots. You don't even need to leave your car. The UC Master Gardeners of Contra Costa have recently supplied local garden centers and nurseries with thousands of vegetable and herb seedlings for purchase at a good price. Just call your favorite supplier and arrange for a pick up. You can also order starter seeds from many online suppliers. Our favorite is Baker Creek at [www.rareseeds.com](http://www.rareseeds.com), but you may currently experience shipping delays.

There is nothing better than the sweet taste of home-grown heirloom tomatoes in the dinner salad, lightly sautéed summer squash slices as a side dish, or fresh salsa made with your own slicer tomatoes and jalapeno peppers. Enjoying your own Great Lockdown home grown produce may be one of the few new pleasures you discover this year. I know we'll be enjoying ours. Thanks, Mom. And thanks, Mother Nature!

Email your comments and questions to: [NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com). In some cases these may appear in future columns.

## CVGC Plant Sale goes online

Clayton Valley Garden Club is holding its annual plant sale. Due to the shelter-in-place restrictions, this year's sale is Online. Buy today, your purchases will be picked up or delivered on May 9th - hmmm, just in time for Mother's Day.



This is the club's largest fundraiser of the year. Proceeds support the club, local schools, monthly educational speakers, Clayton Community Library Beds, Clayton Museum Garden and other community garden projects. Funds will also support club field trips to famous nursery gardens and nursery tours and more.

CVGC propagates and grows their own plants all year for this Annual Fundraiser. Choose from native plants, succulents, locally grown edibles, perennials, and

garden art. Prices start as low as \$3 per plant.

Anyone interested in gardening, conservation, civic beautification is welcome to join. Members of Clayton Valley Garden Club are primarily from Concord and Clayton.

CVGC is a non-profit organization, members of the National Garden Clubs and the California Garden Clubs, Inc. For more information call 925-276-2299 or start shopping at [www.ClaytonValleyGardenClub.org](http://www.ClaytonValleyGardenClub.org).



## Ruth Bancroft Garden to re-open

The Garden plans to reopen on May 12th since Contra Costa County eased Covid-19 restrictions to allow retail nurseries and public gardens to reopen. Ruth Bancroft Garden (RBG) has remained closed during the Shelter-in-place orders canceling all of their in-person events at the Garden for the time being. However, they have launched a whole series of online classes, about two per week on various gardening and horticulture topics.

The staff will be spending May 1 - May

11 preparing the Garden and Nursery to conform to the social distancing and other operational guidelines required in order to protect both staff and visitors. Online plant sales have been suspended.

Classes and workshops will continue to be offered as online webinars until further notice. View their Events section for the schedule at [ruthbancroftgarden.org](http://ruthbancroftgarden.org).

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Author of *Between Shadow's Eyes*

## THE SCARLET PLAGUE

The *Scarlet Plague* is a short novel by Jack London. It was first published in 1912 in "London Magazine" and was picked up by The Macmillan Company in 1915 and released as an illustrated novel. It has since been published by multiple parties with multiple different covers because it is in the public domain. There is a 100th anniversary edition available on Amazon, but you can also find free pdf copies complete with illustrations and e-book versions by doing a Google search. Jack London's dystopian view of 2073 waxes prophetic given the current COVID-19 pandemic. The story is set in the San Francisco Bay Area with the opening chapter set in San Francisco. Berkeley, Oakland, Santa Rosa, and Point Richmond also get mentions. A pivotal scene even occurs at Cal Berkeley.

The story narrator, James Howard Smith, is an aged grandfather and former professor of English Literature. James, now called "Granser", by his grandsons, Hare-lip, Hoo-Hoo, and Edwin is a rare survivor of the scarlet plague. Granser reveals the state of the world as it stands in 2073 where people have become goat herders and hunter-gatherers to survive. But the crux of the story is a recount of his memories of the early days of the plague in 2013. The parallels in the story to COVID-19 are chilling. London describes the post-plague state of San Francisco where bears, wild horses, and wolf-dogs occupy what used to be San Francisco. The return of wild animals is similar to what is currently happening in Yosemite Park as described by Ranger Katie Patrick where bears are now walking down the roads no longer jammed by cars due to the COVID-19 park shutdown. London also laments the demise of the iconic Cliff House restaurant so similar to the closed eating establishments of today. A particularly haunting line in the story is when the old man reminisces about his denial of the disease during the early days of the scarlet plague epidemic: "I told him this flight from the cities was insanity, that there were no symptoms of the plague in me."

Admittedly, some aspects of the novel can be hard to take. The boys are sometimes cruel to their Granser, who, in turn, is pompous and derogatory toward the boys. Even though the tale is a bit grim, I thoroughly enjoyed London's cleverness. His use of language and his view of society is reminiscent of the era London

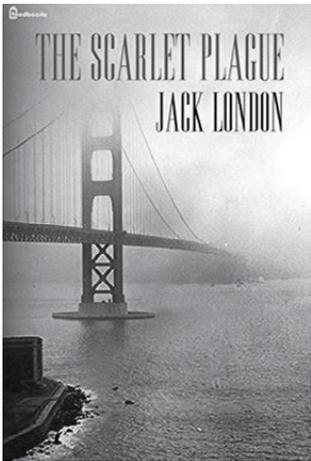
lived in so his opinions and treatment of his grandkids should be taken in context. It is worth overlooking these flaws because of the way his words ring with imagery. He describes the collapse of the world as follows:

"The fleeting systems lapse like foam," and so lapsed our glorious colossal civilization." Readers of Cormac McCarthy's "The Road" and fans of classics, including Jack London's other work, will most likely enjoy the novel.

Jack London (1876-1916) whose given name was John Griffith Chaney, was a pioneer in science fiction and became one of the first writers to become a worldwide celebrity. At his peak, he was the highest paid author of his time. His talent for tackling stories of elemental struggles for survival set him apart as an American novelist and

short-story writer. His writing drew heavily on his life experiences in the Klondike during the Gold Rush and as a seaman. His first work was published in 1898. From there he went on to write such American classics as "Call of the Wild," "Sea Wolf," and "White Fang." An animal activist, London's lesser known novels, "Jerry of the Islands" and "Michael, Brother of Jerry," were written to raise awareness about the cruel practices of circus trainers. London also had a darker side. He was accused of plagiarism, suffered from alcoholism, and was an advocate of eugenics (a set of beliefs and practices that strive to improve the genetic quality of humans, typically by excluding people and groups judged to be inferior.)

London's local roots are felt today. His ranch in Glen Ellen in Sonoma County has been preserved as Jack London State Historic Park. The ruins of a house that burnt to the ground a few months before Jack London and family were to move in, a cottage in which they had lived, and the graves of Jack London and his wife are located there. The property is both a California and National Historical Landmark and worthy of visiting when re-opened after the COVID-19 shut-down is lifted.



Jack London State Historic Park

# BINGEWORTHY

## Home Theater for the Sheltered-In-Place

By David King

With theatres still out of commission and another 30 days in shelter-in-place, there will be plenty of time for excessive TV viewing. Here are reviews of some of the better options across the TV Streaming spectrum.

### Better Call Saul



Better Call Saul, the "Breaking Bad" prequel is in its fifth season airing right now on AMC. You probably caught the first few episodes of season 1 in the wave of hype around Breaking Bad's finale, but it's worth giving later seasons of this spin-off the same level of attention.

I've loved "Breaking Bad", but I think "Better Call Saul" is even better. It has arguably surpassed its ancestor in terms of depth and performance. Bob Odenkirk stars as Jimmy McGill, the man who will someday become Walter White's attorney. If Walter's story was about a man going bad in "Breaking Bad", this show is about a man trying to stay good. It's one of the best shows of the '10s, and you can catch up now on Netflix before it returns to AMC. Carrying slightly more dark humor than the preceding series, it's absolutely worth catching up on Better Call Saul before it ends in 2021.

### The Last Dance



This documentary looks at the Chicago Bulls' record-breaking 1997/98 season, in which they completed their second hat trick of championships (the "threepeat") of the 90s. Complete with never-before-aired footage and interviews with all the main players (including Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Dennis Rodman and manager Phil Jackson), this is a unique look at the most iconic team in the history of basketball.

The 10-part documentary series takes an in-depth look at the Chicago Bulls' dynasty through the lens of the final championship season in 1997-98. The Bulls allowed an NBA Entertainment crew to follow the team around for that entire season, and some of that never-before-seen footage will be featured in the documentary.

### Catch-22

Set during World War II, *Catch-22* follows Yossarian (Christopher Abbott), an American bombardier desperate to get out of the war. He wants to take advantage of the military's policy of discharging any soldier on the basis of insanity. Unfortunately, Yossarian's desire to get discharged for insanity is stifled by the military's *Catch-22* clause: Anyone who is crazy can ask to be discharged, but anyone asking to be

discharged is clearly thinking rationally. So Yossarian keeps fly-ing missions, and his superiors keep raising the number of missions required to end the war, and the war seems no closer to ending. *Catch-22* is a darkly hilarious examination of the horrors of bureaucracy (and war), with a brilliant cast including — along with Abbott — George Clooney, Kyle Chandler, Hugh Laurie, and Ju-lie Ann Emery.

### Mrs. America



The effort to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was one of the central battlegrounds of the women's movement in the 1970s. *Mrs. America* chronicles that fight and the unexpected backlash by Phyllis Schlafly (Cate Blanchett), dubbed "the sweetheart of the silent majority." Told through the eyes of Schlafly and second-wave feminists Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Shirley Chisholm, Bella Abzug, and Jill Ruckelshaus, *Mrs. America* is a political drama that plays both sides of the aisle, depicting one of the toughest political battles of the 20th century. The series explores how this fight helped give rise to the Moral Majority and completely shifted the American political landscape.

### The Mandalorian



The *Mandalorian* is Disney Plus's breakout hit, and deservedly so. This expensive-looking show has unleashed Baby Yoda upon us, a true gift, after hiding the little green alien so well in the marketing materials. Jon Favreau created this series, starring Pedro Pascal from *Game of Thrones*. Episodes rarely exceed 40 minutes. This eight-episode show offers the best live-action *Star Wars* of the last couple of years.

### Star Wars: Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker

If you have 25 hours to kill, all 11 *Star Wars* installments are now available on Disney +, including *Rogue One* and *Solo*. Disney+ gave us a gift by streaming the megahit "Rise of Skywalker" beginning May 4th two months earlier than planned.

In a galaxy far, far away, what remains of the Resistance regroup after the devastating losses of *The Last Jedi*, while Rey (Daisy Ridley) trains with the Force. New Supreme Leader Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) and the First Order look for a secret Sith lair that's broadcasting pro-Emperor Palpatine propaganda. Poe (Oscar Isaac), Finn (John Boyega), and Chewbacca continue on their mission to subvert the First Order and help Rey save the day. Kylo Ren attempts to lure Rey to the Dark Side, believing that their special supernatural Force connection means they're destined to share a throne and rule together. In battle after battle, the two forces fight for the future of the galaxy.

Happy Bingeing!

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# Churches combat pandemic reaction with online success

By Justin Barker

The government response to the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in countless ways. While the effects of this virus on our physical and mental wellbeing is more readily obvious, how this virus has affected our spiritual lives has yet to be explored.

With the shelter-in-place policies, I wondered what has been the impact on our local places of worship? Have our faith leaders adjusted to this outbreak?

I asked that question to Pastor Scott of First Christian Church-Pleasant Hill, a non-denominational Christian Church.

"The biggest challenge in all this is to help people deal with their fears and anxieties," Pastor Scott answered. "While access to medical therapists may be difficult due to an influx of patients, those in the faith community still have access to therapy via their spiritual counselors during this crisis."

Many churches have taken to greater Online presence to serve their members. First Christian Church has been "forced" to make church technology a major project.

"Though we're pretty good with our existing tech, like with all churches, we are on a steep learning and usage curve as everything goes Online. Streaming equipment, software, best practices, Zoom, Bible studies, and more." Pastor Scott shared that he did a "Bedtime Story with Pastor Scott" (while in his pajamas) for 20 kids. "They loved it!"

So far, it's been a positive development, and not just for First Christian Church. The Bay Church of Concord reported that over Easter Sunday, they had 7500 viewers attend one of their online Easter Services. That is three times their average weekend audience, and far more than would have attended in person. North Creek Church

indicated similar online success.

"Humanly, we're staying in interpersonal relationship more than ever... even when we're preaching to a camera for livestreaming, people are responding with gratitude when we look the camera dead in the eye (ok, lens), and hold a personal conversation with each person viewing. Sermons have become more personal to me, knowing that," Pastor Scott confessed. He shared with me that a decades-long member told him they had never felt so close to the church family as now.

Pastor Scott pointed out many "positives" that have emerged through this rough time.

"Families are getting more time together. People are going out of their way to do wonderfully nice things for others - even painting rocks with beautiful messages along trails. It has reminded us of what's important in life in a world that has been so overstressed and numb." Moreover, he explained that the crisis has also drawn his church community closer together as a family.

Pastor Scott offered, "Perhaps a new sense of lifestyle will emerge... people are paying more attention to their mortality..."

I asked Pastor Scott what message he would give to the community at-large?

"Use this time to creatively connect with your family. Think about your legacy. And of course, your eternity. Be the love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control that makes a difference in other people's lives. My prayer is that people's lives will be resurrected; that when this current crisis clears, the pace of life will have permanently changed for the better."



theRIGHT move

by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate  
www.BuyStageSell.com

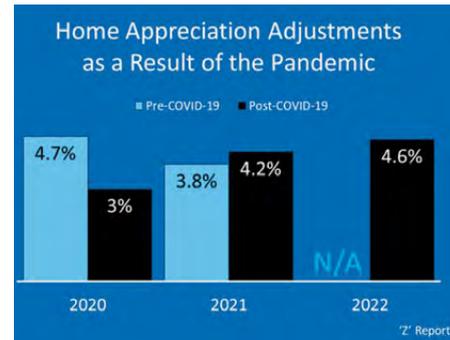
## Perspective : Where are we now?

Last month, my article was a compilation of industry expert opinions that this downturn in the market due to COVID-19 has less similarity to 2008 recession, than to the 9/11 downturn. The 2008 recession started inside the lending and real estate market, and 2001 happened to the economy unrelated to the housing market.

COVID-19 is much like 2001, where we were in a robust economy prior to 9/11 and the recovery in the San Francisco Bay Area took about two months. Are there enough similarities that we can expect that when we all go back to work once the SIP is removed? It's hard to tell, but economists and industry experts feel less negative about it than one might think.

Economist and CEO John Burns (Consulting) is quoted as saying "Historical analysis shows us that pandemics are usually V-shaped (sharp recessions that recover quickly enough to provide little damage to home prices), and some very cutting-edge search engine analysis by our Information Management Team showed the current slowdown is playing out similarly thus far."

Ivy Zelman, (Institutional Housing Sector analyst and CEO, The "Z" Report) states, "Supported by our analysis of home price dynamics through cycles and other periods of economic and housing disruption, we expect home price appreciation to decelerate from current levels in 2020, though easily remain in positive territory year over year given the



Z Report predictions. Home Appreciation Adjustments

beneficial factors of record-low inventories and a historically-low interest rate environment."

My favorite quote is from Ben Bernanke, "My results do suggest that, in the absence of panic, the declines in employment, consumption and output in the early stages of the Great Recession would have been significantly less severe."

In other words, in our digital age of constant information overload, we can create a self-fulfilling prophecy based on panic or one based on confidence. If most of us remain positive and optimistic, we'll be back to a new normal very soon. In the big picture of statistics, a few months will barely be a blip on the graph years from now.



frugelegance

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

## Animal Lid Mason Jars

Animal Lid Mason Jars are fun and so easy to make. They make perfect gifts, and lively home décor. We are using them as elegant party decor. We also love that they can be created on a pretty affordable budget. Supplies can be found Online or in our favorite retail stores. We found some of the animal figures and mason jars recently at our local Dollar Store! That was a pleasant surprise.

Items Needed:

- 24k Gold Spray Paint (regular gold spray paint is totally ok too)
- Bag of Toy Animal Figures
- Mason Jars with Lids
- Glue Gun & Glue Sticks (or Crafter Glue)

First, start by spray painting the assorted toy animal figures and the mason jar lids. We are using gold but of course, you can use any color. Spray paints come in a large variety of colors.

Follow the manufactures guidelines on the spray paint and only spray in a well-ventilated room.



We prefer using spray paint outdoors. When the paint is thoroughly dry, glue the assorted animal figures onto the center of the mason jar lid. Glue gun glue dries very fast, but if you prefer

using a crafter glue, be sure to allow time for the glue to thoroughly dry.

Now your jars are ready to fill with good-



ies. Since our mason jars are being used for a baby shower, we filled with Gold Hershey Kisses.

For home décor fill ideas, try office supplies, toiletries and craft supplies.

Consider filling with chocolates and assorted candies, gift cards, even money if these are to be gifts. Whatever you fill them with, you know you created it with love!



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

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# Out to Lunch

## Rocco's is doin' it right

by Richard Eber

If ever there was needed a call for help during the current COVID-19 Pandemic, it is from local restaurants who have seen their business dwindle with no dine-in business permitted. Those still operating are trying to survive until better times come.

One such eatery that has been beating the curve is Rocco's Ristorante & Pizzeria at 2909 Ygnacio Valley Road at Oak Grove in Walnut Creek. A business that has prospered for 21 years, by catering to local youth and adult teams, delivering an enjoyable dining experience, and managing a thriving bar trade. Despite its past success, this family oriented establishment has had to recently reinvent itself.

Rocco Biale, owner of the restaurant that bears his name has been up to the challenge. Using a web site that keeps in touch with his thousands of clients, he has utilized a brisk take-out and delivery service to keep his operations afloat. To encourage business, he has cut menu prices by 20% for pick-up orders.

Rocco has also extended his popular once-a-week family style \$39.95 Spaghetti Dinner. It is now offered every day. Complete with ample servings of meat balls, choice of sauce, pasta, garlic bread and a bottle of house wine, this menu expansion has proven to be a winner. With a complement of their famous array of pizza offerings (my favorite is The Dominator), they have maintained a brisk business especially in the evenings despite the Shelter-in-place.

"At peak times, lines for take-out extends all the way to Applebee's," Rocco proudly stated. "This has allowed us to keep most kitchen staff employed with only food servers and bar tenders needing to be laid off during the pandemic."

Even in these incredibly hard times for restaurants, Rocco has continued his long record of supporting community organizations and worthy causes with gift certificates. Currently, the restaurant is providing 120 meals a day to nearby hospitals to feed workers. This food is delivered by loyal Rocco's customers who desire to play a small part in helping others.

For Rocco Biale, what is transpiring



with his business reflects a lifetime he has spent in the restaurant field. Starting as a boy who helped at his Grandfather's butcher shop on Connecticut Street in San Francisco Rocco worked at several restaurants in California and Hawaii prior to opening Rocco's. In addition to working for his Dad Mario and Uncle Rudy, Rocco's Mother-in-law successfully also operated Maria Elena's Mexican Restaurant in Concord for over 20 years.

Rocco reflected on when he decided to open the business in 1999.

"At that time, I was putting in 70 hours a week at Melo's in Livermore. I decided if all this work was to be done by me, I might as well open my own place."



Although not a chef, Rocco incorporated family recipes (especially their red sauces) to create a menu that reminds one of small eateries that can be found in Italian North Beach Cafes in his native San Francisco.

In addition to pizza, they offer a diverse selection of homemade entrees including risotto, polenta, cannelloni and, lasagna ortaggio. They also feature sea food delicacies such as calamari, prawns savona, and my go to dish, linguini with clams. New items are routinely added to the menu.

Not to be forgotten are Rocco's salad offerings. I am hooked on their Caesar (with shaved parmesan cheese and extra anchovies) but they also serve excellent alternatives of Italian Chopped, Caprese, and Mediterranean salads. Freshly grilled shrimp makes an excellent add-on to all these items.

The robust bar business thrives by offering a respectable list of California and Italian wines and a wide variety of beer including several local breweries.

In the restaurant field there are owners, chefs, line cooks, waiters, dish washers, and other staff members who toil in the industry. Of this group there are few individuals who have earned the elite title of being "Restaurateur." One such person who has earned such a lifetime achievement award is Rocco Biale.

When the Corvid-19 Pandemic is over, we can expect them to resume normal operations. Until that time Rocco will be manning the fort and continue to serve his clients and the community in the civic-minded way that has characterized the business since it was founded.



Rocco Biale, up to the challenge



Waiting for better days to re-open as indicated by Signs on the doors of Brasas Do Brazil and China Wall, both located in in Concord's Park and Shop off Willow Pass Rd.



# Stayin' Alive

## Restaurants Struggle for Survival

By Richard Eber

*Life goin' nowhere. Somebody help me. Somebody help me, yeah.*

*Life goin' nowhere. Somebody help me, yeah.*

*I'm Stayin' alive. - The Bee Gees from Saturday Night Fever*

It is incredibly quiet now at the Concord Park and Shop. A lone red pick-up truck that resides in a now empty parking lot at Park and Shop Shopping Center tells the whole story. Nearby restaurants Brasas Do Brazil, Burger King, and the China Wall Buffet lie closed during the current Covid-19 outbreak.

These popular eateries are but a part of a dwindling food service industry, both locally and throughout the nation. With rent to pay, employee salaries, and continuing overhead expenses, surviving in this difficult environment, is no easy task.

Much depends on the type of food served and ease of pick-up and delivery. Price is also a consideration. Obviously, franchise operations such as Mc Donald's, Taco Bell, El Pollo Loco, Wendy's etc., have a big advantage because in most cases they already have drive-through operations in place.

Some restaurant success is determined by how well their menu travels once prepared and packaged to go. If the product quality rapidly declines before arriving to its final destination, sales will suffer significantly in a take-out market. Italian, Asian, and Mexican foods generally hold up well.

Businesses that already have an existing brisk take-out trade are at a distinct advantage.

One such place is Tortilleria El Molino at 1500 Monument Blvd in Concord. While many of their competitors are struggling or are closed, this low cost Mexican restaurant is thriving. During peak periods, lines with patrons patiently standing at 6-foot intervals, extend into the street. Their homemade menu of tortillas, tacos, tortas, pupusas, quesadillas, and fresh fruit smoothies are a welcome alternative to "Bun and Run" faire. A solid reputation for quality take-out at a great price, even a pandemic will struggle to defeat that formula for success.

Other local establishments have had to rapidly reinvent themselves after shelter-in-place was ordered. Concord's highest volume restaurant, the Golden Coral All-You-Can-Eat Buffet, has not closed their doors but has found



its overall traffic limited to their fried chicken and a few take-out items. I would consider that a drastic change in their business model.

High-end restaurants have been especially hit hard. Few people desire to partake in a candlelit, intimate dining experience with gourmet delights served from Styrofoam containers with plastic cutlery. However, one such place that has bucked this trend is Lima Restaurant located across from Todos Santos Plaza in Concord.

Owner-Chef John Marquez has created a special menu specifically for take-out and delivery services. For \$25.00, he offers a whole chicken marinated in Peruvian spices along with French fries, salad and a special dipping sauce. He also has put together a "Relief Package" for \$19.00 per person with a choice of a mixed seafood platter, pork adobo, or Tallarin stir fried noodles. These items are served with a beer or soft drink along with homemade shortbread cookies.

Mom and Pop places that have chosen to remain open have faced a significant challenge. The Oasis Café on Stanwell Drive and Bisso Lane in Concord is one such place that has undertaken a different strategy.

Deprived of its regular lunch, catering trade, and barbecued turkey leg concession at local Farmer's Markets, owner Mike Parham has reduced his hours and formulated a special take-out menu of Teriyaki, Chicken Fajitas, and Jambalaya Bowls priced at \$11.00. On Fridays, he delivers these pre-ordered meals to a kiosk that Oasis operates in the Rossmoor retirement community in Walnut Creek.

Thinking outside the box will likely be the mode necessary for restaurants to stay afloat until Health Officials open the economy to include them. However, even when these restrictions are lifted, it will take some time for businesses to regain the volumes they previously enjoyed. With such challenges facing restaurants, it will be difficult for all of them to survive.



## aRt Cottage

by FROgard [www.aRtCottage.info](http://www.aRtCottage.info)



"Procession by Jan Lainoff

## Staying in Touch with Seniors

The Concord Senior Center staff has been busy coordinating wellness calls with the Concord Senior Citizens Club and CC-Café. Governor Newsom called on Californians to make five calls a day to check on seniors.

"We've been calling our 1,200 members to update their information and ask if they need any assistance," said Kelly Madge, Club President. Concord CC-Café staff call their participants weekly to confirm their meal order and offer additional resources. Senior Center staff also reach out weekly via email or phone to more than 100 seniors and volunteers on our wellness call list.

With Shelter-in-place now extended through May 31, seniors are encouraged to have some daily interaction to prevent depression.

If you know of someone who may require assistance, please contact the local resources below.

Senior Nutrition Program: delivering seven frozen meals each week. Call by Wednesday at noon: (925) 825-1488

Meals on Wheels Diablo Region Care Management, Friendly Visitor (over the phone): (925) 937-8311

Contra Costa County Information & Assistance: (800) 510-2020

Assistance League of Diablo Valley – TeleCare: TeleCare provides free daily reassurance calls to housebound people for the health and well-being of the client as well as a friendly exchange of ideas. Trained volunteers call clients Monday through Friday mornings, beginning at 9 a.m. Please call 925-934-0901 and mention TeleCare.

Concord Senior Center: (925) 671-3320, [concordsc@cityofconcord.org](mailto:concordsc@cityofconcord.org)

Email them if you would like to be added to the Senior Center Newsletter.



Heirlooms, LYNN GLENN



16" x 16" by Roberta Welburn-Milstead

## "Abstractly Speaking", the show must go on(line)

Concord is a big city to have but one art gallery to support all our talented local artists. So, when life throws us challenges, it's critical we improvise and adapt. Like other small businesses, aRt Cottage had to close its doors to our guests since March 16. As a lifeline we are now placing our exhibits Online.

Beginning in May, you can enjoy a virtual tour of all the current works for our May and June show, "Abstractly Speaking," by watching the slideshow of each piece while listening to the respective artists speak about their work. As the saying goes, "the show must go on(line)!"

What a wonderful title for all that is happening in our lives today. The participating artists for "Abstractly Speaking" are Jan Lainoff, Lynn Glenn, Pam McCauley, Roberta Welburn-Milstead, and Dee Tivenan. These ladies have a lot to offer in use of color, medium, expressive work, new ideas and concepts. They are gutsy, full of enthusiasm, and not afraid to try something new. That can be seen in their art as well as in their willingness to make this exhibit work virtually. By the way, all pieces can be purchased Online.

All pieces from our last show from our March-April exhibit will remain in the gallery at 2238 Mt. Diablo Street and is available for viewing by appointment only. Masks are required. aRt Cottage and the artists thank you for your support and for viewing us at [artcottage.info](http://artcottage.info). Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Call 925-956-3342. Sit back, relax and enjoy our new exhibit. Stay healthy and happy.



48x48, acrylic on canvas "Journey", Pam McCauley



Wildflower, Mixed Media on Yupo on Panel, 11" x 14" x 1.5", Dee Tivenan

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- Community Theatre Room





# EMOTIONAL HEALTH

By Dr. Holly Holmes-Meredith, D. Min., MFT, Board Certified Clinical  
Bill Yarborough, CHT and Certified EFT Practitioner

## Coping in a Pandemic

If your stress level has exploded during the Coronavirus pandemic, you are not alone. The federal government's Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990) provides counseling to people during natural and human-caused disasters. CNN reported that in March, the helpline saw a 338% increase in call volume over February and an 891% increase compared to March of last year.

Experts emphasize the vital role a social community plays in maintaining both emotional and physical health. With the shelter-in-place restrictions many people have experienced the sudden loss of community gatherings and socializing.

Here are some helpful ways to cope with fears of contracting the coronavirus, surviving economic hardships, and conquering additional personal challenges introduced with extended sheltered-in-place.

**Meet socially Online.** Many social organizations now conduct virtual meetings on Zoom, Skype, streaming or other video conferencing services. These include churches, service clubs, social clubs, exercise classes, etc. Their websites typically have instructions on how to access virtual gatherings and activities. For example, if you miss going to your exercise class, many gyms are holding classes on-line where you can follow your familiar exercise instructor. There are other social activities to explore on-line such as computer game applications for Scrabble, Pictionary, bridge, and others, which can be interactive and involve multiple participants.

**Establish your own virtual connections.** Rather than just reaching out to family and friends via phone, you can create small or larger gatherings using Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, Google Duo, and other services. Even if you feel technology challenged, these services may be easier to use than you think and are often free. For example, Zoom offers free unlimited video conferences for up to 40 minutes, and you can download their application for no charge. People have converted cocktail hours, book clubs, and dinner gatherings to virtual video chats.

**Make masks.** With the new mask requirements in Contra Costa County, you may want to learn how to make them. There are many sites on the internet that show you how. Individuals who have done so report that it can have a calming influence. Donate them to those in need, and the project also provides a sense of purpose.

**Meditate.** If your mind is swirling with the frightening "what ifs" of the pandemic or you are now working at home alongside your partner and school-age kids, you may prefer an inner journey to find quiet time

and peace. There are a variety of methods to help you do so, including prayer, deep breathing exercises, Tai Chi, meditation, and Reiki, an energetic palm-healing technique.

**Mindfulness** is another helpful practice to contend with stress. It involves the sense of being more present in the moment observing your thoughts, feelings, and habits. This can help lead to greater focus on what you can do as opposed to things you cannot control. There are online resources to assist you with these practices, such as such as [mindful.org](http://mindful.org), or [headspace.com](http://headspace.com), meditation apps, and on-line Reiki classes.

**Focus on new opportunities.** With the extra time you may have at home you could take stock of your life and refocus on things that are important to you or open yourself up to something new. In the Chinese language, crisis and opportunity are the same character, and there is no telling what you could discover if you venture down new avenues. Some of our suggestions included listening to peaceful music, exercise, stretching, and walking. Be sure to follow local SIP requirements such as social distancing.

**Engage in creativity.** To take your mind off pandemic worries or loneliness you can also engage in creative activities, like completing a jigsaw puzzle, gardening, cooking, painting, writing, or quilting.

**Change bad behavior.** In our April Emotional Health's column, we offered suggestions to boost your immune system during the Covid-19 pandemic by reducing chronic fear and anxiety.

We suggest you avoid bad sleeping and eating habits and excessive alcohol consumption. Changing such behaviors is not always easy, but there are professional practitioners who can work with you via video conferencing. They offer a variety of techniques such as hypnotherapy, teaching self-hypnosis, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), and others to address the underlying emotions that drive addictive behaviors.

Additionally, there are sites on the internet that demonstrate techniques such as EFT, which are easy to learn and involves tapping on body pressure points to get release from negative emotions.

Professional practitioners can also assist you with depression, grief, anger, and other emotions triggered by the pandemic, and there are teaching professionals who often have interns charging minimal amounts.

If you have questions or comments, please reach out to us via the contact information on our websites: Holly at [hypnotherapytraining.com](http://hypnotherapytraining.com) or Bill at [billyarborough.com](http://billyarborough.com).

# DIARY OF A TRAINER: A PANDEMIC PATH

By Lisa Vonnegut, CSCS

Sunday, March 15, I received a message from two of my long-term clients saying they wanted to discuss how to manage their training sessions. Though vibrant, healthy and more active than people decades younger, at 73 and 82, they knew they were in a demographic most vulnerable to COVID-19.

"We don't want you to lose any money," they said, "but we don't want to come into the studio."

Thinking on my feet, I suggested we try training via FaceTime; them at home and me on the mats at my studio.

We struggled a bit to find the right angles and eventually settled with their iPad on their bedroom floor so I could see them on the ground for mat work and positioned further back for standing work. I guided them through a workout circuit using what they had: resistance loops and two 5lb dumbbells. We were mutually delighted at how easy it was to create movement that was challenging and fun.

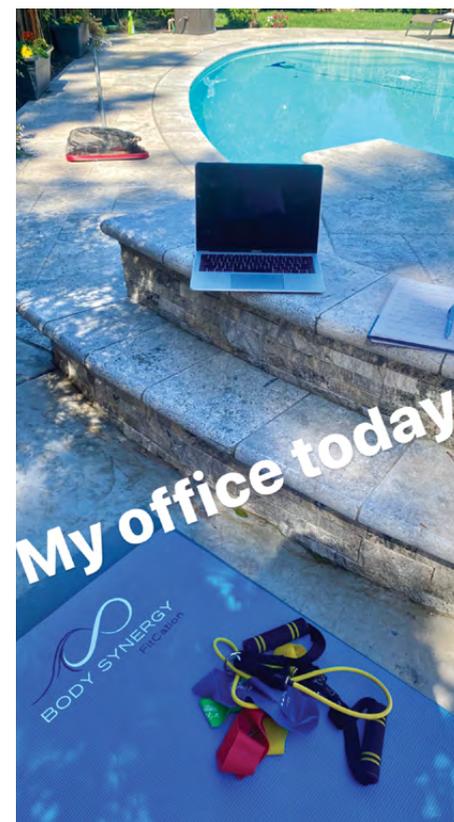
It was an ominous glimpse of what was about to come.

The next day that my iPad began to go crazy. Then one of my partners called and called again, then my husband. It became clear that something had happened. Five different people sent me texts with the same article about sheltering in place.

I left my Oakland studio that day not knowing when I'd be back. I still don't. But my resolve was clear. With the world turned upside down, I had the ability to provide something sane and consistent for the people in my care. I immediately contacted my clients to prepare them for Online training going forward. By 8

p.m. all but one client agreed. The novelty of working from home was initially a breath of fresh air. After all, I had two extra hours in my day without my commute. I slept in, walked the dogs and hung out with my daughter, who began her spring college quarter from home. It wasn't long before the tiny spare bedroom that became my training studio felt confining and the ambiguity of the situation created limbo-like surrealism to my workdays. How long can this continue?

As a participant in a historic event happening in real-time, emotions are hard to put into tidy boxes. There is a strange paradox to the sense of gratitude I feel at the reliability of an income, with the big picture uncertainty of what will happen to my studio and my new FitCation business, a business that involves travel to exotic vacation destinations with clients.



anything else. Regardless of the paradigm, everyone is processing. I fall back on the only things that feel steady and constant.

"Use your breath," I say, "keep your core stable and reach out on an inhale--and exhale and fold." Or "10 more seconds to rest and then we jump."

I am clear that I'm providing a necessary service to my clients.

The 45 minutes I spend with them are a connection to normalcy, a link to life outside of quarantine. I also realize how much I need the sessions, too.

Connection, even video connection, can help with loneliness and act as a salve for our anxiety and isolation. It is the silver lining of the pandemic.

The relationships that we took for granted four weeks ago are our lifelines and for the first time in our lives, are accorded the value that they deserve.

[Lisa Vonnegut is a trainer and coach specializing in neural performance and wellness. She is a partner at Bay Functional Fitness and founder of Body Synergy Fitcation. Follow Lisa: @bodysynergyfitcation and PM your health and fitness related questions to her.]

## Outdoor activities to treat cabin fever

Are you feeling trapped indoors? Here is a list of the activities you can do outdoors in California according to Gov. Newsom most recent easing.

Athletics, badminton (singles), throwing a baseball/softball, BMX biking, canoeing (singles), crabbing, cycling, exploring rock pools, gardening (not in groups), golf (singles, walking - no cart), hiking (trails/ paths allowing distancing), horse riding (singles), jogging and running, kite boarding and kitesurfing, meditation, outdoor photography, picnics (with your stay-home household members only), quad biking, rock climbing, roller skating and roller blading, rowing (singles), scootering (not in groups), skateboarding (not in groups), soft martial arts - tai chi, chi kung (not in groups), table tennis, (singles), throwing a football, kicking a soccer ball (not in groups), trail running, trampolining, tree climbing, volleyball (singles), walk the dog, wash the car, watch the sunrise or sunset, and yoga.



My video sessions open a window to broad ranges of despair.

"2020 is a lost year," one person told me. "But it's only April," I thought.

"I don't know when I'll ever feel safe to go out in public," someone else said.

Some people want to talk about nothing else. Some people want to talk about



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## Masks are required

Keep a mask with you at all times. Contra Costa County requires anyone working at or visiting an essential business, such as a grocery store or gas station, to wear face coverings to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Public transit and government workers must also wear masks when they come close to the public is be present. Members of the public must mask when they: work at an essential business, are inside an essential business, such as a grocery store, visit a healthcare provider or facility, and while waiting in line for or ride public transportation.

Businesses must take reasonable measures, such as posting signs, to remind visitors about masking, and not serve customers who do not observe the order. Workers do not need to mask if they are alone in a personal office but must put them on when others enter.

"We now know that a significant number of people with COVID-19 lack symptoms, or become infectious before they start showing symptoms," said Dr. Chris Farnitano, Contra Costa County's health officer. "That is why we all need to start wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where it's hard to maintain physical distancing, such as standing in line at the store."

Masks are not needed when driving in personal vehicles alone or with members of their households.

When outside, everyone must carry masks or face coverings and use them

whenever they come near six feet of others outside their own households.

People engaged in more strenuous exercise, such as running or bicycling, should stay further apart from others while breathing heavily and take steps to avoid breathing on others.

"Stay in place, space, cover

maintain your your face," Dr. Farnitano said. "One key way the COVID-19 virus spreads is through respiratory droplets that people expel when they breathe or sneeze. By masking and observing physical distancing, we can help protect everyone in the community."

The order does not require children 12 and younger to

wear masks. Children 2 years old or younger must not wear them because of the risk of suffocation.

Face coverings can be anything made of cloth, fabric or other permeable material that covers the nose and mouth and the lower part of the face. Medical-grade masks are not required – a T-shirt or bandana works fine, Dr. Farnitano said.

Masks with one-way valves for easy breathing do not qualify as face coverings under the order because they can release respiratory droplets into the surrounding air.

Visit [cchealth.org/coronavirus](http://cchealth.org/coronavirus) to read the order or for more information about COVID-19. Visit the Centers for Disease and Control for video instructions to make and use cloth face coverings.



## Concord City Council approves framework for marijuana businesses

It will now be possible for storefront cannabis businesses, locally based marijuana delivery businesses and cannabis cultivation operations of less than 10,000 square feet to set up shop in Concord, with the City Council's approval Tuesday night of a series of additions to the city's cannabis ordinance.

Approved by a split 3-2 council vote, the changes approved Tuesday include new categories of licenses for storefront retail businesses (maximum of three licenses); non-storefront retail establishments (delivery only, no on-site sales, maximum of three licenses); and "microbusinesses," growers of cannabis on an area less than 10,000 square feet, accompanied by other retail functions.

Other changes made Tuesday night include removing the distinction between medicinal and adult-use (recreational) cannabis uses as included in the city's allowable cannabis license types; raising the maximum number of cannabis product manufacturing licenses from two to five; and removing limits on the number of testing laboratory licenses available. The previous maximum of testing lab licenses was two.

The areas where most of these businesses will be allowed include the North Concord area north of Arnold Industrial Way and west of Port Chicago Highway; a small light-industrial area immediately east of Buchanan Field; a small light-industrial area surrounded by Interstate Highway 680,

state Highway 242 and Willow Pass Road; and a small light-industrial area south of Monument Boulevard near Costco.

In addition, storefront retailer licenses not part of a microbusiness can only be approved for locations outside of those four areas, in two mixed-use zoning districts. The downtown district with the notable exception of the area around Todos Santos Plaza and the west district which is centered on the Diamond Boulevard retail area.

Councilmembers Laura Hoffmeister and Carlyn Obringer voted "no," both of them balking at the 250-foot minimum buffer zone between

cannabis businesses and "sensitive uses" including schools (they favored a 600-foot buffer). Hoffmeister also opposed permitting storefront cannabis shops in the downtown area, even somewhat distanced from Todos Santos Plaza.

Mayor Tim McGallian, Vice Mayor Dominic Aliano and Councilman Edi Birsan voted "yes."

Applications for the storefront retail and non-storefront retail businesses, and for the two microbusinesses that would feature a retail storefront component will have to go through a "request for proposals" process in which the city would evaluate the applications and choose who receives the permits based on specific criteria.

In Contra Costa County, Richmond, Antioch and San Pablo host marijuana storefront retailers, and Martinez has approved two marijuana businesses that have yet to open.



**legalbriefs**

by Jeffrey Hall, MBA, CPA, Esq.  
Law Office of Jeffrey Hall, PC  
Elder Law & Estate Planning

## Can I make a video will?

In the golden age of the smartphone, you are never far from a camera. This has made the sharing of videos and photos easier than ever before. Easy access to a quality camera has led many people to wonder: can I make a video will? More importantly, folks are curious about whether such a "will" can hold up in court. Given how ubiquitous technology is these days, it is natural to have such questions.

Unfortunately, though, the law has yet to catch up with the constantly evolving digital trends. In California, a will must be executed following particular legal "prima facie" elements such as a writing, must be signed, and witnessed for it to be considered valid. Video wills can be used to accompany the written document, but generally, a standalone video account of a person outlining their estate plans will not likely stand up in court. It may, however, be used to contest a will.

Some argue that the face-to-face, personalized nature of video wills should trump the old-fashioned signing of documents. While the way wills are handled in the future may indeed change, the law is unlikely to reflect such evolving attitudes soon. For all their benefits, video wills reflect just a few moments in time. Official documentation of the person's wishes, complete with signatures and witnesses, will likely continue to remain supreme in the eyes of the law.

That is not to say, however, that all wills are written down all the time. Some states are willing to recognize oral wills made on a person's deathbed. Also known as a nuncupative will, these oral statements are often made when someone is too sick to have their estate plans formally executed. Nuncupative wills are not accepted in every state, though, and they rarely

supersede a written will (if one exists).

If you have specific instructions for how your assets are distributed after you pass, it is worth spending a little time with an estate planning attorney to formalize your will or trust. Should you choose to make a video will in addition to the written estate plan, it may be used as visual proof that you were of sound mind when you made it. You may wish to read the will on camera and add in explanations for the reasoning behind your choices. Such a video may help clarify your wishes and settle any will contests from relatives unhappy with their inheritance.

Your legacy is important. Do not leave it to chance by recording your wishes on a smart phone. Instead, work with an experienced estate planning attorney – it is the best way to ensure your wishes are carried out in the way you intend.

To help determine the best way to prepare a Will, consult with your neighborhood Estate Planning Attorney.

*Attorney Jeffrey Hall, MBA, CPA, Esq. is an experienced elder law & estate planning attorney specializing in trusts, elder law, Medi-Cal planning, trust litigation, and estate administration. [www.HallLawGroup.com](http://www.HallLawGroup.com). (925) 230-9002. They are a Veteran Owned/Veteran friendly law firm located at 3478 Buskirk Avenue Suite 1000 Pleasant Hill.*

*[This article is not intended to be relied upon as legal advice nor the establishment of an Attorney-Client relationship.]*

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## Committed to Recognizing Our Seniors

Every June, thousands of Clayton Valley family members congregate in the Concord Pavilion to be a part of a time-honored end of year academic tradition. The purpose of the graduation ceremony is to create a formal setting for our graduates and their families.

For students, it marks the passage to adulthood and all of the opportunities that life with a high school diploma in hand can bring. For parents and relatives, it is a moment filled with emotion and pride, both of what has been accomplished and for what is to come.

This June, things will be different. The situation with COVID-19 is rapidly evolving as conditions shift almost daily. Our campus remains closed until the end of the academic year. Due to health concerns and prohibitions on large gatherings, extracurricular events have been postponed where possible, but more often canceled. We know these announcements have caused distress for all of our families and especially for members of the senior class.

As Executive Director, I'd like to take this time to express our empathy for everyone impacted, and especially for the CVCHS Class of 2020. I recognize this is not the senior year they envisioned. They undoubtedly have many questions and frustrations — and rightfully so.

In spite of the circumstances, our administrative team and ASB student leaders are working diligently to find creative and inclusive solutions recognizing our seniors, including a graduation ceremony. As dates draw nearer and conditions are updated, these plans may have to shift. However, we remain committed to celebrating our seniors where we can while observing the guidelines in place.

Our first chance to celebrate the Class of 2020 was at the start of this month. Each Spring on May 1st, high school seniors around the country commit to their next steps after 12th grade. CVCHS had the opportunity to recognize students and families on this special occasion in a "drive-thru" event on campus, which was approved by Contra Costa Health Services. The community was able to cheer on our seniors by posting positive comments on a live message board that seniors could see as they announced their plans for post-high school life. Please look for video highlights of the event coming soon to our website and social media platforms.

We are incredibly proud of our seniors and the next steps they have chosen. We



CVCHS graduating seniors are making the best under the current COVID-19 crisis. Pictured here are Aaron Mah, Mackenzie Haley, Serena Connel, Melvin Brown and Alexis Gonzales (L/R) from a rally held earlier in the school year.

have students going on to four-year universities, two-year colleges, the military, trade schools, apprenticeships and the workforce. We want to celebrate them all.

Despite the shutdown of high school sports for the remaining school year, our athletes have continued to sign National Letters of Intent. CVCHS is proud to have the most athletic scholarship awardees of any Concord area high school, public or private. Congratulations to all our student-athletes in the Class of 2020: Alexa Avelar (Soccer, San Francisco State); Casey Barnes (Lacrosse, Merrimack College); Edgar Castaneda (Soccer, Humboldt State University); Eddie Curley (Baseball, St. Mary's College); Darby Dresdow (Soccer, Biola University); Gianna du-Long (Swimming, UC Santa Cruz); Ysobelle Eustaquio (Basketball, Dominican University); Jordan Frost (Water Polo, UC Irvine); Chase Graves (Baseball, University of the Pacific); Telly Hill (Baseball, University of the Pacific); Jackson Nosrati (Lacrosse, Concordia of Wisconsin); Ryan Pierce (Baseball, Fresno State); Ashley Slagle (Softball, Westcliff University); Joey Soberon (Baseball, UC San Diego); and Mana Taimani (Football, University of Wyoming).

I remain confident our CVCHS community will persevere through this unprecedented crisis and will shine bright just like the Class of 2020. It may not feel like it now, but this experience, in all of its inconvenience, will make our students, our school and our community stronger and better prepared for the adversity to be faced in the future.

A final message to our graduating seniors: We look forward to the day when you can celebrate your accomplishments together, as the Class of 2020. I can promise you that one day in the future we will call your name and you will be recognized by a crowd of your peers. Your family will congratulate you on your achievement and

## Walnut Creek hoops Star Ionescu is #1 WNBA draft pick

by Clay Kallam

Maybe the journey started at Larkey Park in Walnut Creek. Or maybe it began at Wagner Ranch gym in Orinda.

Or maybe the beginning reaches back to Romania, the home of her immigrant parents.

But however, it started, Sabrina Ionescu's journey now will take her to the bright lights of New York City, as she was the No. 1 overall pick in the WNBA draft by the New York Liberty.

Back in the day she and her twin brother Eddy would spend their time at Larkey Park, where Sabrina would have to force her way onto the court because the guys didn't want her to play.

"I would wear my Tweety Bird t-shirt," she recalls, which didn't exactly scream "I'm a baller" — but it did make it easier for her and Eddy to squeeze some ice cream money out of those who were sure they could beat some kid and his sister.

That was far from the only time that Sabrina Ionescu surprised people. Unlike many future national Players of the Year — she was honored both in high school for Miramonte and in college at Oregon — Ionescu was not a dominant player from day one. When she first tried out for the Cal Stars' club team, she was just another slender little fourth grader. She didn't dazzle at the tryouts at Wagner Ranch, but she made the team.



Sabrina Ionescu with her Miramonte coach Kelly Sopak. Photo by Beverly Sopak.

"I was definitely not the best player," she says, but Ionescu had the drive and determination to constantly work on her game, the same drive and determination that propelled her parents to come to America as adults.

As she got taller and stronger — she's now 5' 11" — she began to be noticed. She starred at Miramonte High School (she was national Player of the Year in 2016), and then did the same at Oregon, where she set numerous NCAA records, for men and women, most impressively scoring 2,000 points, collecting 1,000 rebounds and handing out 1,000 assists in her career, a trifecta that no other player has approached.

What's next? "I'm just looking forward to getting to work with the Liberty," she says, though no one knows when or if there will be a WNBA 2020 season. And she was also expected to play in this year's Olympics and is hopeful she will get the opportunity in 2021.

Regardless of where Ionescu's journey takes her from here, she's come a long way from wearing that Tweety Bird t-shirt and hustling unwary hoopsers at Larkey Park.



Photo credit: GoDucks.com.

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