

**OCTOBER 2020**



# The Fallidays Are Here

Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival photo credit: Bay Area News Group

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Clayton Valley Graduate Honored at CMA Awards
- County Freezes Rents, Bans Evictions
- Concord Taco Trail discoveries pg.12
- Can Employees Police Their Employers?
- How Safe is Zooming? Pg. 10
- Carmel by the Sea pg.6

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## from the Publisher ~David King

### Time flu by this year

Halloween? Fall? The year is almost over. My how time flu by. (Aren't puns fun?)

So much has happened I almost missed the sad news of the recent passing of Pro football legend, Hall of Famer, Gale Sayers. He passed on Wednesday, September 23, at the age of 77, from complications of dementia and Alzheimer disease. I felt this news was a bit under-reported. Perhaps I'm more sensitive because Gale and I had a brief personal encounter that had a major impact on my collegiate and professional career in advertising.

In 1976, Gale became the Athletic Director at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, IL., the same year I enrolled there to earn a degree in Broadcasting & Advertising. (In 1977, Sayers was inducted into the Pro Hall of Fame.) In 1979, I worked in advertising sales for the student radio station, WIDB. The station was only heard through the student center, on a cable system in its infancy (or should I say in an embryonic state) and in the college dorms if your radio was plugged into its walls. That was it.

Needless to say, selling radio ads was a bit of a challenge. But you did it for the experience, not the 10% commissions. It wasn't a real job. It was just something a student could "practice" in their spare time.

One of my few clients was a deli called Burt's Sandwich Shop, which rested next to the main strip of bars. WIDB carried the SIU Salukis football game, and I had an opportunity for Burt Sandwich Shop to advertise during those broadcasts. Burt was not impressed.

So, to make things more interesting, I decided to meet with our Athletic Director, Gale Sayers. Sayers was young, only 36 at the time, accessible and polite...not what you expect of a superstar and legend.

I introduced myself as a student representing WIDB looking for advertisers to support our broadcast of his SIU Saluki football games. I proposed that with his support, we could increase ticket sales to the game by



adding value to ticket holders while bringing value to the station broadcast sponsors. I asked Sayers to have stadium announcers read a message over the PA during the game a couple of times.

That message was "Attention Saluki Fans, hang on to your ticket stubs, you can redeem them for a half price sandwich at Burt's Sandwich Shop in downtown Carbondale." Sayers went along with it. Before each game, I would hand deliver each game's announcements to his office (1979, no email).

After the fourth home game, Mr. Sayers told me that he was ending the announcements. He was getting too many requests from local businesses who wanted in on the program.

I had to tell Burt that the announcements were no more, expecting his cancellation. But Burt didn't care, stating that the announcements just in the first game made the entire season package worth it for him.

As for Mr. Sayers, he left his position in 1981 to pursue other business interests. In his resignation, he stated that one of his accomplishments that he was most proud during his tenure was increasing outside contributions to the football program from \$25,000 per year to over \$80,000. (equivalent to \$365,000 in 2020 dollars).

Gale and I were on the front end of a major industry metamorphosis. ESPN debuts in 1979. In 2019, sports marketing is now a \$76 billion industry. In-stadium advertising exploded in the 80s with the installation of massive screens and Jumbotrons.

And Gale and I practically invented it. RIP Mr. Sayers.

## City of Concord to move ahead on homeless, mental health teams

The Concord City Council voted unanimously to begin work to create its own Mental Health Evaluation Team to work full-time within Concord, and to expand the Coordinated Outreach Referral and Engagement (CORE) homeless outreach team from half-time to full-time.

CORE teams serve as the main entry point into the county's programs to help the homeless. Concord officials want to expand the Concord side of that from half-time to full-time. The city will now approach Contra Costa County, which administers the CORE teams, about creating a Concord-only CORE team.

Contra Costa Health Services and county police chiefs joined to form the Mental Health Evaluation Team program, with teams in east, west and central Contra Costa. Each team consists of an assigned local police officer and a county mental health clinician. Concord aims to form its own MEHT as well.

Council members said they see these teams as providing more specialized responses to calls for which police alone are not always equipped to handle.

"I want a mental health team going out when there's a mental health crisis," Councilman Edi Birsan said.

Councilwoman Carlyn Obringer said she believes a medical professional should be part of the Concord CORE team, and supports adding that element as the plan moves forward. She called Tuesday's decisions "the next logical step" in improving response to homelessness and mental health calls.

Obringer accompanied Jack Fleihman, the Concord samaritan who has been preparing and delivering meals, water, and other items daily to Concord's homeless, in attempt to get a better understanding of the homeless issue in her District.

Concord leaders have been under pressure to de-emphasize police spending and move some of those resources to social services, including homeless and mental health services.

A number of call-in public commenters told the council these steps don't go nearly far enough, given the need.

## Contra Costa County to buy Pittsburg Motel 6 with \$21.5M state grant as a homeless shelter



Gov. Newsom presentation at Motel 6 in Pittsburg. photo: screen shot by Contra Costa County Herald

A 174-room motel in Pittsburg now sheltering homeless Contra Costa residents at high risk from COVID-19 will become a permanent service hub to help county residents transition into stable living situations, thanks to a \$21.5 million state grant. Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) rented rooms at the Motel 6 at 2101 Lovelidge Road to provide temporary housing through the state's Project Roomkey program, which funded hotel rooms for residents who could not effectively isolate themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Homekey, the state's follow-up program, will commit \$17.4 million toward the purchase and renovation of the property by the county, and another \$4.17 million toward staffing and operating the former motel as temporary housing for the

homeless, with on-site healthcare and behavioral health services, meals and assistance connecting with the services they need, according to CCHS.

The grant includes funding for case management, housing navigation services, meals and a robust peer support program, among other services.

Motel 6 was one of four in Contra Costa contracted to shelter vulnerable residents who had no housing early in the COVID-19 pandemic, partially funded by California's Project Roomkey. CCHS is now renting 494 rooms at these motels to house people experiencing homelessness, including more than 200 people at Motel 6 who will continue to receive services and progress toward self-sufficiency under Homekey.

## Amazon Fulfillment Center is coming to Oakley

The City of Oakley announced that the first tenant of the Contra Costa Logistics Center is Amazon.

According to the City, the Amazon Fulfillment Center will occupy the 150,000-square-foot Building #1 at the Contra Costa Logistics Center Complex located at 6000 Bridgehead Road. Once completed (2024), five buildings totaling 2 million-square-feet will house a variety of light industrial and logistics uses, providing nearly 2,000 jobs to the community.

A formal announcement and ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on Wednesday, October 7th.

According to the City, they have planned for development at the site since 2002



and is expected to bring in \$388,400 annually to the city's General Fund and a \$420,000 per year contribution for the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District once its completed.

The city says the plan calls for five buildings to be constructed on a 143-acres along the southwest portion of the site, with the additional 232 acres remaining natural.

The project will also provide several roadway improvements.

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by Elaine Schroth, CEO & President

## Fall-iday Travel Just Ahead

As more restrictions are lifted, now is the perfect time to start making plans for family fall and holiday getaways to Concord. Whether you're showing off Mt. Diablo's scenic trails or taking them to indulge in our tasty Beer and Taco Trails, the cool fall and winter months are always a great time to be here.

Now that much of Concord is safely open and able to welcome leisure travelers again, all nine of our hotels are currently booking reservations for holiday and fall weekend stays. With social distancing protocols still in place, many guests who may have bunked with family members in the past are now opting to stay in hotels for added space and comfort. It's also reassuring to know that Concord hotels are also Clean & Safe Certified by California Hotel & Lodging Association, considered among the highest cleanliness standards anywhere in the country.

And as a bonus, guests who book a hotel reservation in Concord can also receive one of Visit Concord's awesome Stay & Play gift packages. They can choose from themed packages like Beer Trail, Shop & Dine, Holiday and many others, and receive a fun assortment goodies including gift cards, restaurant coupons, beer and wine selections or cool Concord swag. Get the complete package details Online at: <https://www.visitconcordca.com/hotels/specials-deals/stay-play-hotel-packages/>

Of course, they'll find lots to do here including some holiday shopping at The Veranda, The Willows and SunValley shopping centers. Most of our restaurants,



breweries, tap houses and wine bars are open for business with patio and takeout service. And be sure to check out Visit Concord's new beer and wine tasting maps for all of Contra Costa County, available now on our website. What trip to Concord would be complete without sampling at least one of the 39 authentic restaurants and taquerias that make up Concord's Taco Trail.

Concord's 3rd annual Oktoberfest celebration will be virtual this year, but we promise it won't be short on fun. Pick up special beer and food packages from any of our participating tap houses and set yourself up for a virtual Porch Pour Party. The event starts on October 1 and runs all month long. You can get the Visit Concord Passport for Oktoberfest on our website now.

Concord is all about community and supporting local businesses just goes with the territory. Now more than ever, shopping, dining, staying, and playing locally means taking care of our own first. Our hotels and restaurants are the backbone of Concord's tourism economy and they have had an especially tough year. Please be sure to keep them top of mind for your travel plans or those of your family and friends. Just as they are here for us, we are here for them, too. Stay safe. We look forward to seeing all of you in Concord enjoying the Fall-idays!

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## Art and Pumpkin Festival is off, Championship pumpkin weigh-off is on

By David King



Giant pumpkins are ready to be weighed Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off at Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival. AP photo.

Local pumpkin patches will be hard to find this year with Clayton Valley Pumpkin Farm opting out of the annual tradition as COVID-19 *squashed* those plans. "We are concerned over the safety of our employees and customers," said owner David O'Steen.

We certainly will miss the Mega-event, Half Moon Bay's Art and Pumpkin Festival as well. That festival has grown into one of California's biggest and most beloved festivals. Next year's event should be spectacular as it will be its 50th anniversary.

However, this year, gourd growers and pumpkin purveyors will still compete on October 12th at the 47th Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off — the "Super Bowl of Weigh-Offs" there. The event will be Livestream on Facebook for

us all to watch.

Weigh-off organizers and Safeway are offering a world's biggest top prize of \$7 per pound. Also at stake are thousands of dollars in super hefty prize money doled out to the top 20, plus the big carrot: a \$30,000 total mega-prize for a new world record pumpkin entered at Half Moon Bay.

Last year, a new California record was set when two-time Half Moon Bay champion Leonardo Urena's hoisted his goliath 2,175-pound mega-gourd on the scales. The Guinness world record belongs to a Belgium farmer at 2,624.6-pounds.

Additional \$1,000 prizes will be awarded for: Most beautiful Pumpkin, Biggest California Pumpkin and Biggest Coastside Pumpkin.

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## Supervisors extend eviction ban, freeze rents through January 31

At their meeting on Tuesday, September 22, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed an urgency ordinance that continues a moratorium on certain evictions for residential tenants in the County through January 31, 2021. Urgency Ordinance No. 2020-25 also continues a moratorium on certain residential rent increases through January 31, 2021. The Ordinance is retroactive to September 1, 2020.

Contra Costa County's urgency ordinance provides additional protections to the state's COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act of 2020 (the Act), which passed and took effect immediately on August 31, 2020. The Act extends eviction protections for residential tenants experiencing financial hardship related to COVID-19.

"The urgency ordinance demonstrates the Board's continued commitment to protect residents struggling with the unexpected economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Supervisor Candace Andersen, Board Chair. "We continue to seek ways to support renters and landlords, and hope that all parties will resolve to work together during this challenging time."

This law applies to properties in all 19 cities in the County and in all unincorporated areas. To the extent that a city has adopted a law on the same subject matter, then the city's provisions would apply in that city.

### Protections granted to residential renters:

**Ban on No-Fault Evictions** – A property owner cannot evict a residential tenant for any "no-fault" reason except to

protect the health and safety of the owner or another tenant, to allow the owner or their immediate family to move into the residential unit or to remove the unit from the rental market.

And prohibits a landlord from terminating a residential tenancy on the basis that a tenant allowed an unauthorized occupant to live in the dwelling unit, if the occupant is the tenant's immediate family member living in the dwelling unit as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Moratorium on Residential Rent Increases** – A property owner may not increase rent on a residential property through January 31, 2021. State law prevents this freeze from applying to commercial tenancies and to certain residential properties, including residences built within the last 15 years and single family.

Under this ordinance, tenants of residential properties, small business tenants, and non-profit organization tenants cannot be evicted because they failed to pay rent that was due after March 15, provided they give their landlord/property manager notice and documentation showing they have lost their jobs, their income has been reduced, or they have increased medical expenses because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nor can property owners charge or collect late fees for rent due between March 16 and September 30, 2020.

These prohibitions and the specified exceptions last through January 31, 2021.

For information and resources, visit Contra Costa County website [www.contracosta.ca.gov](http://www.contracosta.ca.gov).

## Free flu shots available



Getting vaccinated is more important than ever this flu season. Vaccination will help keep hospitals from being overwhelmed by flu patients while they also care for those with COVID-19.

Vaccinations are available to everyone age 6 months and older. No appointment is needed, and all are welcome regardless of insurance or immigration status. You must wear a face covering.

Concord's flu clinics are scheduled for:  
Wednesday, Oct. 14 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Monument Crisis Center (1990

Market St.)  
Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Loma Vista Adult Center (1266 San Carlos Ave.).



**Jennifer Stojanovich**

Realtor, Better Homes Realty

## SELLING YOUR HOME DURING THE HOLIDAYS

### To Decorate or not to Decorate?

'Tis the season to decorate your home with holiday décor. But what if you are selling your home? Do you decorate or not? You don't want to miss this season of joy, but also don't want to scare off potential buyers. Follow these simple steps provided by HGTV to appease both sides of decorating and selling your home:

Clean and stage before decorating. If your family room is already overcrowded, adding holiday cheer will make it feel underwhelming.

Create a cozy vibe. Add a bowl of pinecones, or a vase of evergreens. Simple pumpkins placed at your front door to welcome guests is the perfect Fall roughage. Simple, warm touches are the key.

Compliment your pallet. Choose holiday decorations that match the design of your home. Compliment it.

Accentuate the positive. Too many decorations can hide the finer points of your home. Accentuate your fireplace with garland or hang mistletoe from an arched door.

Be an equal opportunity decorator. Leave religious decor in storage this season. You want buyers to focus on your home.

Go easy on the lights. Use simple string lights to play up your home's architecture, or uplight the stunning tree in your front yard...but leave the inflatable reindeer in the box.



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## Clayton Valley High graduate honored at Academy of Country Music Awards

By Matt Switzer

The Academy of Country Music's annual award show aired on September 16 and featured Tricia Yearwood performing "I'll Carry You Home."

The song was in memory of people who have recently died and influenced the country music industry. The greats like Charlie Daniels, Kenny Rogers and Joe Diffie were featured, as well as broadcast engineer Bob Kingsley, and music industry professionals including Clayton Valley High School alumni, Michael Busbee. The video screen behind the stage at the Grand Ole Opry House featured the picture of Busbee while Yearwood performed.

Busbee was a musician in the Clayton Valley band between 1990-1994, specializing in the trombone and saxophone before progressing his talents into producing and song writing. His talents were recognized by many in the country music industry including Garth Brooks, Blake Shelton, Lady Antebellum, Keith Urban, Kelly Clarkson, and many more.

Maren Morris who established a friendship with Busbee mentions him seven times on the recognition page of her 2016 debut album, "Hero." The debut single, "My Church," was co-written by Busbee, earning him and Morris a Grammy for Best Country Solo Performance in 2016. In early 2019, Busbee partnered with Warner Bros. Music to open his music




business in Southern California. Later in 2019, Busbee was diagnosed with a rare brain tumor and passed away in September of the same year.

Although his life was short lived, he influenced so many through performing, producing, song writing, and consulting with country music artists. None of his professional relationships were more close than the one he established with Maren Morris, who took home "Female Artist of the Year" award at this year's ACM's. Busbee admitted in an interview in 2017, he was "taken back" by Morris' talent and couldn't wait to work with her. Beyond the album accolades for song writing and producing, their partnership helped establish Busbee as a sought-after producer and song writer in Nashville. Michael Busbee, June 18, 1976 – September 28, 2019.

*(This story originally appeared on Claycord.com on September 17)*



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## EMOTIONAL HEALTH

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

## Find Your Inner Resources During Tough Times

The Coronavirus pandemic, out-of-control wildfires, and an intense election cycle are all contributing to heighten levels of anxiety and depression in many. BenefitsPRO reported that a study published in early September found depression symptoms among U.S. adults has increased threefold during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers from Boston University and the University of Chicago announced that depression symptoms jumped from 8.5% before the pandemic to nearly 28% after the pandemic took hold.

One helpful option available to us to gain relief from the pandemic and sheltering-in-place are walks outdoors and small gatherings at parks, outdoor restaurants, or backyard patios. But even those avenues are sometimes limited in Contra Costa County and much of the West Coast because of red flag warnings and the poor air quality from the wildfires.

So, must we grow increasingly anxious or depressed during these challenging times? When the helpful resources to relieve anxiety become restricted, explore those resources that lie within you.

Sometimes following such a path can lead to a life-changing renewal.

Holly had a client who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Besides receiving medical treatment, she embarked on a healing journey where she focused on how to make different life decisions. Instead of overusing drugs, she learned to establish better boundaries and found the strength to say "no." She completed her healing journey and overcame her cancer.

"This may sound strange, but cancer was my biggest teacher. It helped me realize what is important," she said.

There are many ways to explore the resources within. Some may choose creativity. Bill did so in his 20s when his brother became severely ill. It was difficult to witness the hardships the illness created not just for his brother but his entire family. To find relief, Bill chose creative writing as an outlet. This choice led to a life-long passion for writing, which also markedly improved his job performance by enhancing his writing skills. Many people likewise turn to journaling to traverse difficult times. Numerous therapists recommend it as a therapeutic technique. Of course, there are other creative outlets, such as artwork, crafts, study programs, photography, blogging, organizing, video production, and countless others.

Generosity is another avenue. We met a couple who lost a child a number of years ago. To deal with the grief, they created a nonprofit, the Forever Family Foundation, designed to help other parents cope with the loss of a child or other loved ones. It became an enduring, caring organization, which has helped innumerable individuals better cope with bereavement. During the pandemic and wildfires, many individuals have given time and money to worthy causes helping those suffering through hardships, like the loss of a job, home, health, social contacts, or death of a loved one.

When you go through a period of challenges, you might want to focus on what matters to you. During this election season, you have an opportunity to have your voice heard through the ballot box. Some people are writing cards or making phone calls to voters in battleground states urging them to vote. If you are anxious about the outcome of the election, taking a proactive step may lessen your anxiety.

Of course, many find inner strength by turning to a higher power. Alcoholics Anonymous has long maintained it is a vital step to recovery from addiction. Religious, spiritual, and therapeutic practitioners can show you how to access the higher power of your belief system as well as your inner resources. Prayer, meditation, hypnosis, energetic exercises, such as Reiki, are just a few of the possible approaches that can lead you to become connected with something greater than yourself.

We all possess inner resources that hold the potential to turn us in a positive and life-changing direction. When times are good, we are often not compelled to explore those possibilities. But during hard times, such as these, we may have greater motivation and more time to engage in such an exploration.

If you find it difficult to address your anxiety or depression on your own, seeking professional help from a qualified practitioner can make a significant difference. Many practitioners are available online or in person using a variety of therapeutic techniques to assist you. Teaching professionals often have interns who charge 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).

## Halloween Blood Drive

Mark your calendars for October 31. Concord Elks Lodge #1994 is sponsoring a Red Cross Halloween blood drive at 3565 Clayton Rd. in Concord on Halloween day from 9AM – 3PM. Walk-ins are welcome, but best to go Online and make an appointment at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org), type in your zip code and follow the prompts. Or, you can call to schedule an appointment at 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767.) Each donation we collect can save up to three lives.



## Concord Elks Lodge feeds Vets

Concord Elks Lodge #1994 is serving approximately 60 meals a week to veterans in need through both the Swords to Plowshares program in Oakland & SF and the Veterans Accession House in Pittsburg. To help feed these people, each meal is \$13 and consists of an entrée, salad & dessert. All the recipients so far have been ecstatic. The Accession House is opening up another location in Concord.



Head Chef Will Johnson handing some meals to Leonard Ramirez CEO of Veterans Accession House.



## JOURNEYMAN'S JOURNAL

by Jill Hedgecock

# Escape to Carmel-by-the-Sea

With California parks under siege by wildfires (over 8,000 so far this year according to Cal Fire,) many of them north of the Bay Area, we decided to go in the other direction for a little R&R to Carmel-by-the-Sea. And a beautiful weekend jaunt it was.

Carmel-by-the-Sea probably either conjures images of stunning, rugged coastline or the iconic Pebble Beach Golf Course. The quaint 1-square mile city and breathtaking peninsula shorelines have appeared in over 200 commercials and movies, including "East of Eden", "Play Misty for Me", and "National Velvet".



The infamous Lone Cypress tree

Celebrities such as Clint Eastwood, who served as mayor from 1986 to 1988, Ansel Adams, Bing Crosby and Paul Anka have called it home. Doris Day left her mark on the city by allowing dogs to stay at her hotel. Carmel has since become known for its dog friendly policies. One of the quirky things about the city is there are no addresses, parking meters or traffic lights and no sidewalks outside of Carmel's downtown commercial area. Because of COVID-19, Carmel now has a strict mask policy (minimum \$100 penalty for violations) requiring masks to be worn even outdoors.

Located a mere 2-hour drive from the Bay Area, this is a destination worth visiting. My husband and I took a long

weekend over the Labor Day holiday to celebrate a friend's 60th birthday. We stayed for two nights at the Carmel Bay View Inn which is centrally located in the city and easy walking distance to downtown.

While the guys played golf, I explored this charming destination. From driving the famous 17 Mile Drive, window-shopping and enjoying the art displayed in gallery windows downtown, to hiking off the beaten path, this was a memorable trip.

**17 Mile Drive.** There are 17 points of interest along this scenic drive. There are three gates to gain access each charging a \$10.50 fee. Some stops will take longer than others. At Spanish Bay Beach (#3), surfing, hiking the boardwalk and picnicking are good reasons to linger, but avoid swimming here due to strong rip currents. Point Joe (#5) is a great spot to watch cormorants and other birdlife. No evidence of the many shipwrecks that occurred there remain though. Experience the power of the ocean and get a scenic overview of Bird Rock at China Rock (#6). Bird Rock (#7) is a great place to see frolicking sea lions, harbor seals, pelicans and a variety gulls, including the gray Heermann's gull with its bright, orange bill. Check around the rocks and you might spot a ground squirrel here too.

The numbers of pelicans are impressive. California brown pelicans are a conservation success story. The species was first declared endangered in 1970. But after the pesticide DDT was banned which had caused eggshells to thin and chicks to die, the populations fortunately recovered enough for the Fish and Wildlife Service to remove brown pelicans from the list of threatened and endangered species on November 17, 2009.

The shoreline is not the only picturesque scenery. Crocker Grove (#11) contains the largest and oldest Monterey cypress trees in existence. Proceed on to the famous lone cypress tree turnout (#12). For more than 250 years this recognizable solitary tree has weathered the elements on a rocky outcrop. It became the logo for Pebble Beach Resorts in 1919.

The next stop (#14 Ghost Trees) contains the eerie skeletons of cypress trees. The rock islands are also popular



Carmel Beach

roosting spots for pelicans. Here I watched a male pelican expanded his orange pouch, tipped his head back, and wrapped the orange skin around his neck and face. I also spotted a dolphin.

The next and final major stop is Pebble Beach Golf Links (#14,15). In addition to golf, there are various shops and a visitor center at this stop.

It takes about three hours to see the sights so it can easily be completed as a day trip. But check the website before visiting though due to COVID-19.

Around sunset, hit Spanish Bay and relax at an outdoor table while a bagpiper serenades the crowd. The performance occurs rain or shine. He/she begins on the first tee at The Links at Spanish Bay in front of STICKS and finishes 45 minutes later at the Spanish Bay fire pits by the second green. This tradition has occurred since the golf course opened in 1987.

**Golf.** There are four golf courses in Carmel and another 20 golf courses within 20 miles. The oldest course in the Carmel area is the Del Monte Golf Course which opened in 1897. The most famous greens, of course, are found at Pebble Beach. The U.S. Open has occurred there a record six times, more than any other course over the last 50 years. Playing Pebble is on many a golfer's bucket list. While still coming with a hefty price tag (\$575), COVID-19 has created the unique opportunity to play the course without a pricey mandatory stay at their hotel.

**Downtown Carmel and Carmel Beach.** Dining and shopping is an event in Carmel. Eclectic stores and charming cafes can be found tucked along stone-paved alleyways. I enjoyed a breakfast sandwich one morning at Café Carmel Coffee House. You can download the Carmel Fun App for a map of the shops and eateries at [www.CarmelFun.com](http://www.CarmelFun.com).

Carmel Beach is located at the end of Ocean Avenue. The beach is dog-friendly and beach fires are allowed. Surfers and beach goers should be wary of rip currents and sleeper waves. There is no lifeguard at Carmel Beach.

**Hiking Off the Beaten Path – Mission Trail Nature Preserve.** Suffused with natural beauty, hiking the California Coastal Trail is a good activity to plan. However, to explore a part of Carmel that is off the beaten path, Mission Trail Nature Preserve is an excellent option. This 34-acre park contains three miles of maintained hiking trails but be aware of poison oak.

Hikers can meander through a variety of habitats including Monterey pine forest, coast live oak woodland, and wetlands.

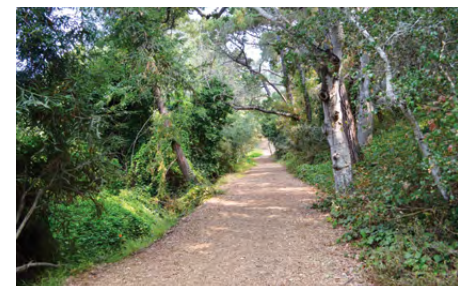
Work in a visit to the historic Lester Rowntree Native Plant Garden (driving access also available at 25800 Hatton Road). Rowntree (1879-1979) wrote over 700 articles and two books. She was



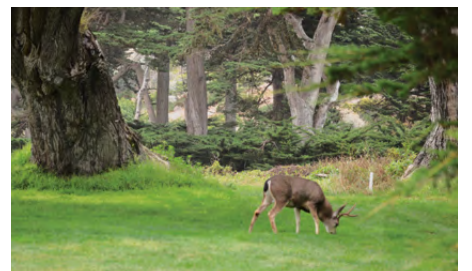
Bagpiper at Sunset at Roy's (Links at Spanish Bay)



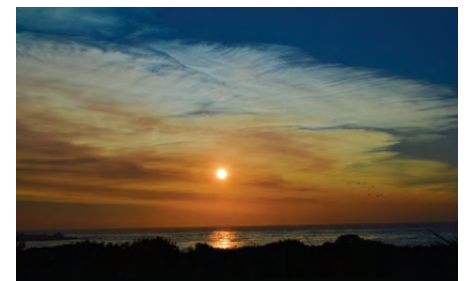
Golf at Pebble Beach, \$575 green fees



Mission Trail Nature Preserve



Carmel Beach

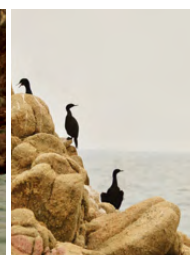
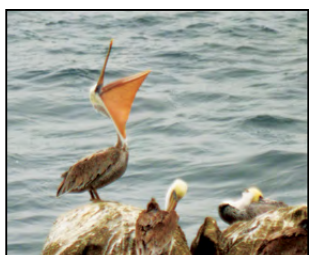


an early advocate for planting native vegetation in gardens. In addition to scenic views of the Carmel Mission and Point Lobos, the gardens are nestled next to the Flanders Mansion which is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Carmel lived up to its reputation for beautiful scenery and rich history, fine dining. A visit here is a perfect getaway from the cataclysm that surrounds us.



View from Rowntree Native Plant Garden



Enjoy a variety of wildlife along 17 Mile Drive.



# CLAYCORD®

## NEWS & TALK

### In case you missed it...

#### Contra Costa County passes resolution declaring a climate emergency

The Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution that endorses the Declaration of a Climate Emergency in Contra Costa County.

The resolution “demands accelerated actions on the climate crisis and calls on local and regional partners to join together to address climate change.”

The Declaration of a Climate Emergency resolves to achieve a range of initiatives, including:

- an interdepartmental Climate Action Plan task force

- Incorporate County’s climate goals as it considers recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

- The County seeks input from the community to help the County plan for a “Just Transition” away from a fossil-fuel dependent economy.

- The County will prioritize the implementation of its Climate Action Plan in order to achieve greenhouse gas reductions.

- The County considers impacts on residents, especially the young, the elderly, low-income or communities of color, and other vulnerable populations.

The Climate Emergency resolution further calls for “a unified Countywide voice around climate change and strengthen the call for state and federal actions and funds to address the economic, social, public health, and national security threats posed by the climate crisis.”

#### Contra Costa Health Order seeks increased COVID-19 testing

Private health care providers operating within Contra Costa County must now provide timely COVID-19 tests to essential workers, those with symptoms and those exposed to the virus, according to a new health order released by Contra Costa Health Services.

The county has formally asked Kaiser Permanente, John Muir Health, Sutter Health and San Ramon Regional Medical Center to voluntarily adopt policies allowing anyone who asks to get a fast COVID-19 test, whether or not they have symptoms. The health order takes effect Oct. 8.

Contra Costa County Health Officer Dr. Chris Farnitano told the county Board of Supervisors that some health providers operating in Contra Costa have not been doing their share of COVID-19 tests. Farnitano and Supervisor John Gioia specifically cited Kaiser, which has the largest health plan enrollment in Contra Costa County.

Spokeswoman Kerri Leedy said Kaiser has been in compliance with state orders on testing in California and is following the direction of the state Department of Public Health and the state Department of Managed Health Care on COVID-19 testing.

About 2,300 people get tested every day in Contra Costa. The county’s goal is to test about 4,500 people daily.

#### Gov. Newsom signs Executive Order phasing out sale of gas-powered passenger vehicles by 2035

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order Wednesday phasing out the sale of gasoline-powered passenger vehicles by 2035.

The order would require all new cars and passenger trucks sold in the state after 2035 to be zero-emission vehicles,

with the goal of reducing and, ultimately, eliminating the state’s reliance on fossil fuels.

#### East Bay Regional Park District reopening some facilities

The East Bay Regional Park District announced it is reopening day use, camping and boating at some parks beginning Oct. 2 with capacity limitations in place on a first-come first-serve basis.

Parks with planned area and facility reopenings include Del Valle Regional Park, Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area, Anthony Chabot Regional Park, Lake Chabot Regional Park, and Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve.

Though most East Bay regional parks, shorelines and trails have been open to the public during the pandemic, many park areas and facilities were closed on March 25 to adhere to state and local health orders.

All picnic areas, barbecues, and group campsites will continue to be closed in adherence to state and local health orders.

The park district asks visitors to follow all social distancing guidelines from local health agencies, and people must bring a mask or face covering to wear when within 6 feet of other visitors.

#### More random seeds from Asia arriving in Contra Costa County

A Pleasant Hill resident was the latest to receive a random, unsolicited package of seeds in the mail from Asia.

The County is coordinating with the state to test and examine the seeds, which have shown up in thousands of mailboxes



throughout the country within the past few months.

If you receive seeds in the mail, call the county at 925-608-6600 and they will pick them up for testing.

#### Zoomoween?

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) advises county residents to show their Halloween spirit this year by doubling down on dress-up and decoration and reducing their Covid-19 risk by avoiding trick-or-treating, haunted houses or big holiday gatherings.

COVID-19 can easily pass from person to person through close contact, and it’s difficult to maintain a safe distance on porches and doorsteps, especially in neighborhoods where trick or treating is popular.

Dressing up in costume can still be fun even if you choose not to go out. A remote costume party by Zoom or Skype can also provide an opportunity to share with friends or family.”

*Edited from original. Read full articles and comments on [www.Claycord.com](http://www.Claycord.com) or at [Facebook.com/claycord](https://www.facebook.com/claycord).*

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# DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

## Halloween's Old Laws and Odd Facts

Halloween is the second highest grossing commercial holiday after Christmas. In many countries, such as France and Australia, Halloween is seen as an unwanted and overly commercial American influence.

Mexico celebrates the Days of the Dead (Días de los Muertos) November 1 and November 2 instead of Halloween. The townspeople dress up like ghouls and parade down the street.

### Halloween Spoilers

Contra Costa County Supervisors have urged no trick-or-treating, haunted houses, and Halloween gatherings over safety issues with COVID-19.

This brings back memories of my childhood. In Southern Illinois, trick-or-treating was permitted over four days. It seemed incomprehensible that in other parts of the country Halloween was only honored one day a year. Each year my hometown was threatening to reduce our activities to just two days due to excessive "tricking".

So some extensive Online research, I found several cities around the country with unusual or restrictive laws affecting Halloween celebrations, presumably aimed at protecting the public from the potential human-made horrors of Halloween. Here are a few of them.

Belleville, Illinois masks are banned for anyone over 12 years old. Even worse, Trick or Treaters over the age of 12 may face a misdemeanor charge, up to six months in jail, and \$25 to \$100 fines. The trick-or-treating curfew is from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Walnut, California, (not to be confused with Walnut Creek, CA, as some sites do) in an attempt to decrease robberies and crime on Halloween, no one is allowed to "wear a mask or disguise on a public street" without a permit from the sheriff — on Halloween and the other 364 days of the year. Want proof?

**"Walnut City Code. Title 3 PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE. Chapter 3.48 OFFENSES—MISCELLANEOUS. 3.48.200** Wearing mask or disguise. No person shall wear a mask or disguise on a public street without a permit from the sheriff."

In Dublin, Georgia, it is illegal for anyone over the age of 16 to wear a mask, sunglasses, or any other facial covering on Halloween

Under California state law, it's illegal to wear a "mask, false whiskers, or any personal disguise" in order to conceal your identity when you are committing a "public offense" or trying to escape when charged with, arrested for or convicted of a crime. So, trick-or-treating on Halloween with a false mustache is legal, but don't rob a bank or run from the police in disguise.

In Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, trick-or-treating is illegal on Halloween if it falls on a Sunday. In that case, trick-or-treating is only legal (strictly by children under 14 years old) on October 30 between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

It's illegal in Alabama to dress up as a "minister of any religion, or nun, priest, rabbi or other members of the clergy," on Halloween or any other day. Those who do can be punished with a fine of up to \$500 and jailed for up to a year.

In Hollywood, California, it's against the law to "possess, use, sell or distribute Silly String" in public from 12:01 a.m. on October 31 to noon November 1. Violating the law can result in a \$1,000 fine.

In Newport News, Virginia, trick-or-treating by anyone over the age of 12 is prohibited. If you are of legal age to trick-or-treat, you may do so no later than 8:00 p.m. Breaking either of those rules and face a fine of up to \$250. If you are older than 12, you may accompany trick-or-treaters, but you better not wear a mask if you are over 16 — that's illegal, even on Halloween.

Private establishments and stores in California have the right to bar you from entering their place of business if you are wearing a costume, even on October 31st.

### At the Movies



The movie "Halloween" (1978) was on such a tight budget that they had to use the cheapest mask they could find for the character Michael Myers, which turned out to be a William Shatner Star Trek mask. Shat-



Map shows the most popular candy in each U.S. state, by CandyStore.com, based on sales over the last 12 years.

ner initially didn't know the mask was in his likeness, but when he found out years later, he said he was honored.

The sounds of stabbing in the "Halloween" movie is made by a knife being plunged into a watermelon.

The original name of Count Dracula in Bram Stoker's famous book was Count Wampyr.



### Candy Fix

The average bag of candy that one child will collect on Halloween contains about 11,000 calories

The original creator of Milk Duds wanted to make the candies into perfect circles. When that proved impossible, he called them "duds." He added the word "milk" to refer to the large amount of milk used to make the candy.

The top 10 most popular Halloween candies in the U.S. are Skittles, Reese's Cups, M&M's, Snickers, Starburst, Candy Corn, Hot Tamales, Tootsie Pops, Sour Patch Kids, and Hershey's, in that order.

While Candy Corn made number six on the best Halloween candy, it also took the number one spot of the worst candy. Either way, Candy Corn is definitely the

most controversial candy of Halloween.

### Pumpkin Bumpkins

Comedian John Evans once quipped: "What do you get if you divide the circumference of a jack-o'-lantern by its diameter? Pumpkin  $\pi$ ."

Two-time Half Moon Bay champion Leonardo Urena's goliath 2,175-pound mega-gourd won the 2019 Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off and set a new California record. The Guinness World Record for Heaviest Pumpkin is from Belgium and weighed 2,624.6-pounds.

Pumpkins are classified as a fruit, not as a vegetable. In 2006, New Hampshire declared that its state fruit is the pumpkin.

The first jack o'lanterns were actually made from turnips.

According to Irish legend, so named after a man named "Stingy Jack" who, because he often tricked the devil, was forbidden entrance into both heaven and hell. He was condemned to wander the Earth, with nothing but a coal to light his way, which he put in a turnip. The Irish referred to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern."



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### CRACKER JACKS

POPCORN

BEER

SODA

PEANUTS

HOT DOG

CAP

FIRST

SECOND

THIRD

BASE

CATCHER

PITCHER

### SHORT STOP

UMPIRE

TEAM

STADIUM

CHEER

FAMILY

SPORT

GLOVE

UNIFORM

BASEBALL

CARD

BATTER

COACH

### GAME

PLAY

OAKLAND A'S

SF GIANTS

RAIN



## Word Search Plus PLAY BALL!

We thought we would make our word search a wee more challenging. We've hidden a code that will reveal a famous athlete of Bay Area interest.

### CLUE:

This former San Francisco 49ers and San Francisco Giants player won two Super Bowl titles and made one World Series appearance, and is the only player to ever hit a home run and score an NFL touchdown in the same week?

### Hint:

Find all the letters that are not utilized in the word search to reveal an anagram. Unscramble them and you will have your answer. Answer on page 16.



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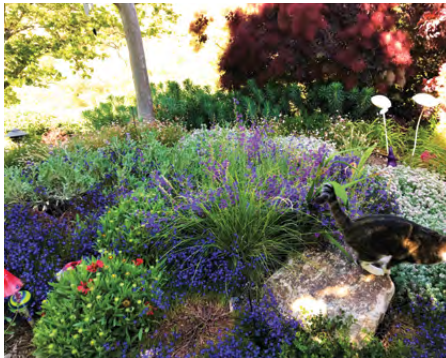


## David George THE NAKED GARDENER

### Build a Natural Meadow for Your Yard

These continuing shelter-in-place days place more emphasis on the quality of our immediate living spaces, specifically our homes and surrounding gardens. My wife and I spend many of our free hours wandering through the landscape immediately next to our back door. The fresh air and tangy aroma of sage helps form great thoughts and provides a welcome break from endless Zoom sessions.

One of our most enjoyable landscaping projects was replacing our back lawn, mortally wounded by the drought of 2015, with a meadow formed by native grasses and low mounding, flowering bushes. We achieved many benefits with this change. Our water bill has been significantly reduced and there is no mowing required. We have a meadow full of flowering bushes, dramatic grasses, and meandering pathways that are also attractive to butterflies, honey bees, and other beneficial creatures. The plants we chose have also filled our backyard with intoxicating aromas of sage, clover, and manzanita. Our meadow is both striking and harmonious with nature.



Meadows can glow with colors and form.

The process is to first turn off your water supply to your back lawn. Wait until the grass turns brown, then cover it with a sheet of (biodegradable) butcher block paper. Cover the paper with a 2-3 inch layer of bark mulch. This smothers the lawn's roots and kills the grass after a couple of months of hot, dry weather. Add an inch of rich compost and soil mix then rototill the compost, mulch, and what's left of the paper into the soil (don't hit your irrigation pipes). These steps require some work, but you now have a clean and fertile slate to perform your meadow artistry.

Mound up a few spots into rolling hillocks for showy flower displays. Add any dry creek beds, small ponds, meandering stone pathways, or other interesting hardscape features. Replace your overhead sprayers with a network of drip irrigators and micro-sprays to planting locations. Add your plants (my list is below), and finish with another 2-3 inches of bark or non-flammable mulch to retain water in the soil. You're done! After a couple years of establishing and growing, your backyard meadow will be the envy of the neighborhood.

**Plantings:** Here were the final selections for our backyard meadow.



**Hairy Canary Clover** (*Dorycnium hirsutum*) – A low mounding, blue-green shrub that produces pink-white blossoms in spring, but stays green and bushy throughout the year.

**Various colored yarrows** (*Achillia*), with plate-sized tufts of white to yellow to terra cotta to red pepper colored spring flowers, and maintains its attractive shape through the year.

**Various sages** (*Salvia*) that can grow high with purple spikes (Mexican), spread widely with white flowers (Bees Bliss), or produce multi-colored red/white blossoms (Lipstick). Pick your own favorites at the nursery.

**Beard tongues** (*Penstemon*) Our favorite colors: blue, lavender, red, and pink. Garden centers carry dozens of brightly colored, water wise, and evergreen varieties.

**Different colored phlox's:** *Paniculata* (lavender, pink, or red), or *Subululata* (candy-striped white and red). They burst with color in late spring as the weather warms, then dry out completely in summer but will green up again once fall rains return.

**Groundcover manzanitas** (*Archto-staphylos*), such as *Edmundsii* (Carmel Sur), and *Emerald Carpet*, that spread, stay green all year, and produce masses of small pink flowers in spring.

**Reeds and rushes** - We planted reeds and rushes, such as tall Cape Rush (*Chondropetalum elephantinum*) and California native gray rush (*Juncus patens*) around the dry creek bed.

**Introduced and naturalized Jupiter's Beard** (*Centranthus ruber*), with its bright pick flower clusters that bloom from spring through fall will find its way into your meadow in no time if you have part-shade portions.

**Native and ornamental bunch grasses** in attractive shapes, sizes, and colors to complete the meadow. Some of our favorites were blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*), red fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), and lime tuff

(*Lomandra longifolia*). They retain their interesting shape even after turning brown in dry summer months then bounce back with winter rains.

We love our all-natural



Add dry creek beds and meandering stone pathways



backyard meadow and our friends and neighbors love it, too. It is a relaxing and rejuvenating spot to wander and think, and a great place to spend long shelter-in-place months. Even our naked metal goats love the scenery!

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



Fall is a great time to visit and a great time for planting.

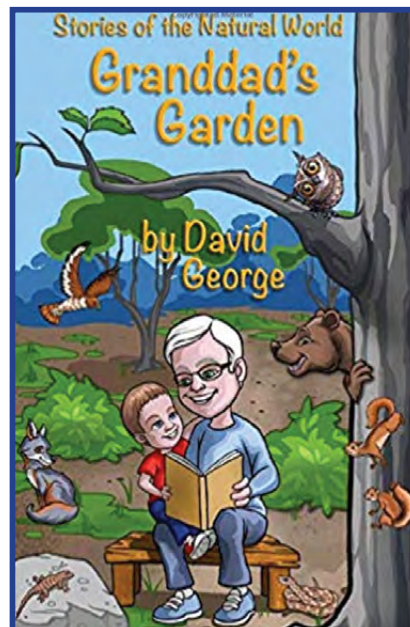
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Gabriela Aldava  
Diversion Specialist, 3 years



Meet Gaby! She has been working for Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery for 3 years. She started out as a Customer Service Representative helping residential and commercial customers. Now, she is our Diversion Specialist. Her main job is to help commercial accounts sign up for recycling services.

*"I love working with a variety of customers and helping them reduce waste and recycle more. I feel really lucky to be a resource for such great people in the community."*

For more information on how MDRR can be a resource to you, please visit our website at [www.mdrr.com](http://www.mdrr.com)







## computercorner

by William Claney,  
Tech Writer, Computers USA

### How safe is Zooming?

When I think of a Zoom meeting, I am reminded of the movie Total Recall starring Arnold Schwarzenegger where he is a bad guy disguised as a good guy, but in reality turns out to be a good guy in the end. Weird, yes.

Some time back I wrote about the dangers of using social media like TikTok, Facebook, and Zoom meetings. In the old days, about a year ago, these sites were toxic for the PC user and we warned against their use without proper intrusion protection, and we were right.

However, some of these social media sites have stepped up the game and I would consider them a good choice as a way to interact with your students, colleagues and friends. Continue to stay away from TicToc until the US gains ownership of the sites, and Facebook – Meh, I still don't like it.

That said, we are wholeheartedly now recommending and endorsing Zoom. The Zoom engineers have been busy addressing our concerns about security, usage and training. In my opinion, they are ready for "prime time" and your business. So, let's get Zooming!

One would start the relationship with Zoom with a Google search for, "zoom getting started" and the first entry is the one you want. Getting Started – Zoom



Help Center. (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101679-Getting-Started>)

Click the Desktop Category. "Getting Started on Windows and Mac," now you're on the way to making connections. Really that simple. Instructions are simple, clear and concise. Go meet up with your contacts.

In order for the video conference to work you'll need a computer built within the last four years. For it to work well, we recommend a computer requirement of an i3 with 8GB of RAM, 2GB Video RAM (shared is okay) and a fast, Solid State Drive. While the standard hard drive configuration will work, it is not optimal, and the lack of video smoothness will be obvious if your video system is older than four years.

Now, the web cam is really important. To get an okay picture you want a camera that provides at least 480p. In today's terms, that low resolution (lo res). Anything less will not be acceptable. 480p is good, 720p is better, and 1020p is best.

If your camera is rated higher than 1020p the higher resolution will not be noticed – yet. Remember you MUST HAVE a strong anti-virus system to protect you against virus or hack attacks coming from your friends. One doesn't have to worry much about the site being hacked as the engineers have addressed these issues, however, your friends may not have adequate virus protection and connecting directly to them could expose you to their infections or hacks.

We recommend a managed service cyber security product like our #1 rated CUSA Care: Cyber Security available at a price similar to the do-it-yourself services like Norton, McAfee, AVG and others not worthy of mention. Call your local computer tech for details.



## theRIGHTmove

by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate  
[www.BuyStageSell.com](http://www.BuyStageSell.com)

### How will I sell my home?

You may have noticed fewer real estate signs cluttering streets and corners on weekends and evenings. At first, we Realtors were just as perplexed as you may be. But if anything, we are resilient and adaptive. The Covid effect has caused innovation in many areas of real estate. Those of us who are serious about our real estate careers are in this for the long run. What are we doing you ask?

Remember an open house weekend with 100+ attendees? Well only about 5-10 of those were serious buyers and/or would fall in love with the home they were viewing. Guess what we have found? Those same 5-10 buyers are now viewing the home and perhaps making an offer. The lookie lous are looking online. It is hard to get used to, yes, but that is the new reality.

Fortunately, the market has continued as if there were no COVID, except for about the six weeks Realtors were not allowed to sell or show homes. In most cases, the market is better than in February prior to Covid. (Email me if you want the statistics to prove that statement, [info@buystagesell.com](mailto:info@buystagesell.com)).

So how do we show homes while being safe and respecting the Covid guidelines? The guidelines are constantly evolving, but the primary protections remain the same.

If you are a buyer, prior to viewing a property you are to have found it online, viewed the listing, floor plan, video and photos there. If you have further interest, you provide a preapproval letter, in many cases, and a form PEAD-V (Property Entry and Advisory Declaration – Visitor). The form asks you to declare that you have not had Covid, do not know anyone that has Covid, are not sick or feeling ill, and agree to follow the Covid guidelines and rules of showing.

## NO OPEN HOUSE?

Here are some of the showing rules included in the posted instructions on the door of each home.

Only one Realtor and two related parties are allowed in the dwelling at one time. Everyone will wear a mask, and at the seller's discretion booties, and/or gloves. Viewing groups should not overlap and must stagger timeframes so as not to be exposed to others. Seller's should be gone whenever possible. For their own safety, children should not be in tow.

Agents conducting the showings should meet clients at the property and not drive in the same car. All visitors should honor social distancing and wash or use hand sanitizer prior to entering.

The Realtor showing the home should open doors and cabinets, turn on or off lights, etc. Visitors should not touch any surface at the house.

There should be no fliers or handouts since all that information is available digitally.

Upon leaving the home, Realtor and/or sellers should sanitize the surfaces, and rooms on the way out before the next group.

Serious buyers are basically there to view the home in person, and this procedure allows that with these limitations.

And the homes keep selling. If you are interested in a viewing of a home, it is possible and practical within these guidelines. Give a call to your Realtor.

*Terrylynn Fisher, Broker, follows COVID guidelines for buyer showings, CRS Certified Residential Specialist, Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES), Dudum Real Estate DRE#01882902. 925 876-0966, [info@BuyStageSell.com](mailto:info@BuyStageSell.com). DRE#00615420*

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*Terrylynn Fisher*

REALTOR® | CRS, SRES, CSP Elite Agent

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**Jill Hedgecock's bookends**

[www.jillhedgecock.com](http://www.jillhedgecock.com)

Author of "From Shadow's Perspective"

# UNSHELTERED

"Unsheltered" (2019, Harper Perennial, Reprint edition, paperback, 496 pages, \$14.89) by Barbara Kingsolver takes place in two time periods: 2016 and the late 1870s. The stories are connected by the home at the corner of Sixth and Plum in Vineland, New Jersey. Vineland is a real town founded in the 1860s as a utopian community entrenched in Christian beliefs by a tyrant named Charles Landis.

In 2016, the house is occupied by Willa Knox, her husband, Iano, an opinionated disabled father-in-law named Nick, their adult daughter, Tig, who has recently returned from Cuba, and her son Zeke's baby. In the 1870s, Thatcher Greenwood, a science teacher, lives in the same residence with his new wife, Rose, his social-climbing, widowed mother-in-law, and Rose's free-spirited sister, Polly. Another key character is neighbor Mary Treat, a real-life naturalist of that era.

The novel waxes philosophical about the current polarized political climate in Willa's world in 2016 and the debate of evolution versus religion instigated by Charles Darwin in the 19th century. Both Willa and Thatcher struggle to make ends

meet in the same house that is in serious need of repair in both stories. Kingsolver expertly navigates the dual narrative between her compelling characters and interweaves the theme of what it means to be unsheltered.

Willa is an unemployed journalist after the magazine she worked for folded. Her husband, Iano, has taken a low-paying university position after the prior institution where he was employed closed its doors. The home they purchased on the university property that he and Willa had funneled their life savings into no longer belonged to them. On top of that, without

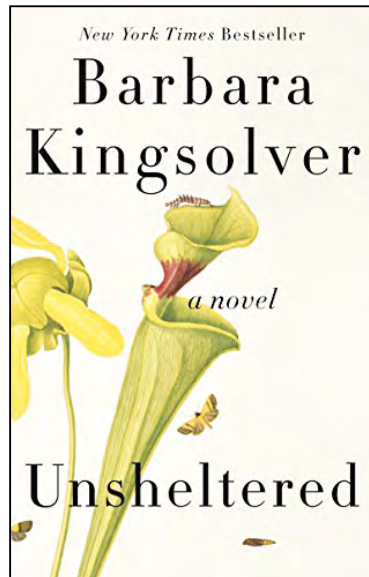
health insurance, Iano's meager income is being used to pay for services for their sickly father-in-law's costly medicine and the medical equipment needed to keep Nick alive. On top of the financial strain, Nick's right-wing, climate-denier politics, and his cantankerous personality create stress for Willa who holds anti-Trump, pro-science opinions. As Willa tries to prove her home has historic significance so that the house qualifies for grant money for much-needed repairs, Willa learns about Mary Treat, a remarkable scientist who corresponded with Darwin

and who may have lived in her crumbling abode.

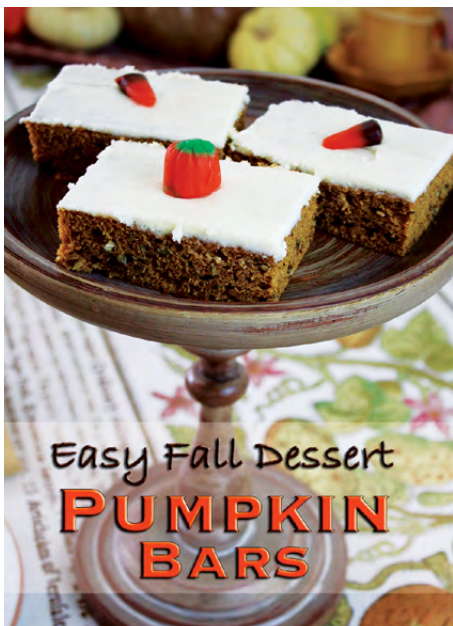
The other half of the story, told from Thatcher's perspective, depicts the challenges for scientists in the 19th century. Mary Treat, a progressive thinker, and a woman of unusual curiosity, steals the limelight in this portion of the novel. We first meet Ms. Treat as Thatcher observes her lying down as she counts ants. Thatcher, who finds himself questioning the compatibility of his marriage, soon finds himself turning to Mary as his confidant when he is forbidden by the school headmaster to teach his student's scientific principles that are at odds with religious teachings. These two kindred spirits explore the complex topic of evolution when the concept was a divisive controversy.

"Unsheltered" is a bold statement on human conflict. It's clear that Kingsolver has an agenda and those with certain political leanings may take offense. But in classic Kingsolver prose, she delivers a novel that is intelligent and thought-provoking. Her message of human resilience in trying times is memorable. A compelling read!

"Unsheltered" was selected as One of the Best Books of the Year (2018) by NPR, O, The Oprah Magazine, San Francisco Chronicle, Christian Science Monitor and Newsweek. Barbara Kingsolver is a #1 New York Times bestselling author. She is also the author of 30 books, including "Animal Life and Poisonwood Bible" which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the Orange Prize. Kingsolver was awarded the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for the body of her work in 2011. She received the National Humanities Medal, our country's highest honor for service through the arts, in 2000. Kingsolver earned degrees in biology from DePauw University and the University of Arizona. Since 2004, Barbara and her family have lived on a farm in southwestern Virginia, where they grow an extensive vegetable garden and raise Icelandic sheep.



## Pumpkin Bars



Easy Fall Dessert  
**PUMPKIN  
BARS**

### Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 cups canned pumpkin
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1-1/2 cup chopped pecans

1. Mix above ingredients thoroughly and add the 1-1/2 cup chopped pecans.
2. Grease large jelly roll pan or cookie sheet with sides.
3. Pour batter and bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes until toothpick poked in the center comes out clean.



### Frosting:

- 6 oz Cream Cheese
- 3/4 cup Butter
- 1 tablespoon Milk
- 1-3/4 cup Powdered Sugar
- 1 tsp Vanilla

Mix the frosting ingredients, till smooth, and spread on cooled sheet cake. Refrigerate 24-hours before serving. Serve and enjoy.



If you are entertaining, make a double batch and freeze some for yourself for later.

You can find more Fall favorite recipes on our blog, [www.frugelegance.com](http://www.frugelegance.com).

Carol and Randi, the FruGirls, are local home stagers and decorators. FruElegance is where Frugal and Elegance come together.

Ready for Pumpkin Spice Season? 'Tis the season when all our favorite (and some of our not so favorite products) turn into pumpkins (spice) throughout Fall. You name it and there's a pretty good chance it comes in pumpkin spice around these days: lattes, creamer, oatmeal, breakfast cereal, yogurt, ice cream and yes, even beer, and wine too. We are big fans but for us, nothing beats home baked Fall goodies.

Our pumpkin dump cake is a huge blog favorite of ours. Another winner is our homemade Pumpkin Bars Recipe. They are so easy to make, tastes fantastic and is simply a perfect fall favorite dessert.



# Out to Lunch

## My Taco Tour

by Richard Eber



For years it has been an uphill battle for me trying to resist sampling every taco stand encountered. With fond memories of enjoying street varieties in Rosarita Beach to the Carne Asada at San Francisco's famed La Taqueria, I am addicted to this Mexican specialty.

When my editor gave me the assignment of covering the Concord Taco Trail of 39 local destinations, the first thing that came to mind was writing about some of my favorite haunts such as El Molino, Taqueria Los Dos Gallos, and maybe sneak in a fave outside the Concord border, Los Panchos in Martinez.

Instead, I was given the mission of discovering some of the lesser known eateries. With the assistance of my taste-tester friend from the city of Guadalajara, Manuel, I am highlighting five eateries from our month-long taco binge that deserve to be visited during Covid-19 and beyond.

### Taqueria la Soledad 1758 Salvio, Concord

Located in the back of the Park and Shop parking lot amid delivery trucks and dilapidated storefronts, this taqueria doesn't exactly have a great location. Once inside Soledad's doors, the aroma of homemade Mexican food fills the air.

During my visits, I enjoyed a great lunch of chicken tacos with salsa, cilantro, and avocado. I also tried their wet burrito al pastor which was a complete meal without the rice and beans that accompanied it. Of note are the Menudo (Tripe), Birria (Goat soup) and the Caldo Del Rees (Beef Soup), all filled with tomatoes, avocado, peppers, and other fresh ingredients.

Taqueria La Soledad is a throwback to traditional Mexican food.

### Los Portales Taqueria-4305 Clayton Rd, Concord

This family owned and operated restaurant located in the Safeway Shopping Center has one of the most complete and high-quality Mexican offerings in Concord. From chile cheese tamales to chimichangas,



Combination plate from Los Portales

everything we tried at Los Portales impressed me.

For those with hearty appetites, select from their combination plates of one to three items. Choose from a list including an enchilada, tostada, taco, tamale, chile relleno and a quesadilla. The portions are large if you care to share.

Los Portales also features an extensive sea food menu including shrimp and Tilapia. The Cocktail de Camaron, Ceviche Plate, and the Seafood Fajitas Marinas, are all good selections. While Los Portales, is slightly more expensive than many competitors, their high-quality ingredients are well worth the extra cash outlay.

### Los Arcos Taqueria 4530 Clayton Rd., Concord



Located at the former site of a Taco Bell, this place also serves some of the best Mexican food in the area. The long diverse line of Latino's and other nationalities proves to be a testament of the high caliber cuisine served here.

On my first visit, their chile verde taco literally knocked my socks off. It was so flavorful that salsa was unnecessary. The chile relleno and the sopa were made fresh and void of a soggy texture I often find in such dishes.

Manuel, my expert taster, preferred their taco selection, especially their crispy chicken tacos.

### Carnes Jalisco 2186 Solano Way, Concord

This taqueria is by far the most different that can be found in the region. If there is one state that can be considered quintessentially Mexican, it is Jalisco. Carnes Jalisco's spin on Mexican food is like no other. It features beef cooked in a Jalisco sauce of its own broth, cilantro, onions, and selected spices. The final consomé is used in their wide selection of burritos and tacos.

With orders of these fried delicacies, a small carton of consomé is included. When eaten, the taco is dipped into the sauce making what amounts to be a Mexican French Dip sandwich. The result is delicious and more to my liking than most sandwiches in this genre.

Carnes Jalisco's Teco Taco which is their version of a grilled cheese sandwich is also dipped in the Jalisco sauce. It is worth the visit just to partake in this wonderful treat.



### Tacos El Patron 2290 Monument Blvd., Pleasant Hill

This place is off the Concord Taco Trail, but El Patron is an ideal place to receive your taco fix. All of their dishes are crammed with abundant amounts of fresh meats and spicy house-made salsa.

Especially noteworthy was the choriqueso (chorizo sausage), served with melted cheese. Their shrimp filling is



Choriqueso

worth the short wait. The Mexican spices meld perfectly with the tender jumbo (21-25 sized) shrimp.

This taqueria is popular during peak business hours, so it is recommended to call ahead with orders. Covid-19 restrictions remain in place. When indoor seating is restored, this a great place to take the family and get a taste of old Mexico.



## Local farms yield fall favorites

By Deb Morris



Fall is here and farmers' markets are beginning to close for the season. Farmers have been quite resilient. Small local farms are undeniably important to the economy and to local

food systems. Even with the restrictions that the coronavirus has forced upon them, there are still many farmers' markets that remain open year-round. While farmers do have other sources to sell their product, farmers' markets are important to many local farms.

What's in season? Brussels sprouts, grapes, squash, dark leafy greens, tasty Buckeye Gala, Fuji, and Pink Lady apples, fall flowers, other vegetables and of course pumpkins. All of this seasonal produce can be found at the farmer's market fresh from the farm. Go to [www.pcfma.org](http://www.pcfma.org) for dates and locations.

This time of year, some farms offer pumpkin patches, hayrides, U-pick apples, and corn mazes. Along the roadside you will see farm stands and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) subscription boxes. Many local farms enjoy a fairly lucrative agribusiness with these activities that can help sustain a farm until spring.

Visiting these fall activities will undoubtedly involve a few changes this year such as wearing a mask and observing social distancing. Check with your favorite local farm to see if they are open during the pandemic and are following safety guidelines.

Swank Family Farms in Hollister is famous for its pumpkin patch and sunflower fields activities and they are going ahead with all their usual events with a long list of safety measures. Tickets can be purchased Online at [www.swankfarms.com](http://www.swankfarms.com).

Another seasonal favorite are the pumpkin spice recipes. Here is one you will surely enjoy.



A few of the fall attractions at Swank Farms in Hollister. Photo courtesy Swankfarms.com.

### Crispy Pumpkin Spice Cookies

2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoons salt  
11 tablespoons butter at room temperature  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup molasses  
1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger  
2/3 cups pumpkin purée  
1 large egg  
White sugar for dusting  
1 to 3 dashes cinnamon, clove, nutmeg and black pepper  
2-1/3 cups all-purpose or whole wheat pastry flour

Whisk together the dry ingredients. Using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar. Add molasses, pumpkin, and fresh ginger and mix for two minutes. Add egg and mix for one more minute.

Form two 1-1/2-inch thick logs in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for two hours. Preheat oven to 350°F. Slice log into 1/3-inch slices and place on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle the top with white sugar. Bake for 8 minutes, then drop the temperature to 200°F. (The temp is turned down to avoid a cake-like cookie. The pumpkin purée makes the dough moister than regular cookies.) Bake for ten minutes until crispy. Transfer to a cooling rack and serve.

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**aRt Cottage**

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

## October brings fresh air to extended exhibit

Oooh October! I look forward to this time of year enjoying the changes in the air. Skies are blue once more and the heat is not so bad. With COVID-19 and fire season, September traffic at aRt Cottage has been slow for our "Five from Six" show.

This is a wonderful exhibit featuring five pieces each from six different artists. Please join me for the artist reception and open house on Sunday, October 4 from 2pm – 4pm.

The first week of this show, a curious newcomer stopped by the aRt Cottage. He liked looking at art so he rang the famous cow bell at the door for me to greet and invite him in.

Happily, I gave this young man a "tour" and told him a little history about the cottage, a former fruit picker's bungalow that I converted into a gallery. He lingered and purchased two of artist George Rammell's pieces, "Blue Man" and "Parade!" I was thrilled.

Prior to that sale, Rammell's piece, "Desert," sold to a New Mexico resident, who viewed it online! Ahhh, the magic of online sales and You Tube.

At the reception, I am looking forward to introducing Rammell to this young man who made the in-house purchase. It is always a pleasure to sell someone's art, and a joy for me to connect the artist and purchaser. There is a mystery and delight to that encounter.

Here is a taste of some of the exhibits you will view, George Rammell's piece, "Still Hungry." Colin Hall reminds us of our magnificent forests with his "Sierra View." "Looking Down the Oregon Coast" by Robert Orelli Bradley takes us to the ocean. Tom Quinlavin's, "Opportunity Knocks" ponders the Earth and sustainability. Martin Biro's, "Road to Santa Fe" takes us into New Mexico. You can enter the jungle with Walter Crew's, "Two Tigers!"

Eric Vandetta's piece, "Moonlight Cat Dance" is fun to look at, classy, and always interesting. His pieces are amazing as he works from photos and uses photo editing software to transform and create.

"Always abstracted to some degree, most of my art would probably be called surreal or psychedelic," Eric says.

I love supporting our local artists. It is my true passion and a joy to be here in this community. Thank you all for your support and be sure to drop by at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. in Concord and browse. You too will be supporting local small businesses. COVID regulations are in force. Signs on the door



Moonlight Cat Dance by Eric Vandetta



Two Tigers by Walter Crew



Looking Down from the Oregon Coast by Robert Bradley

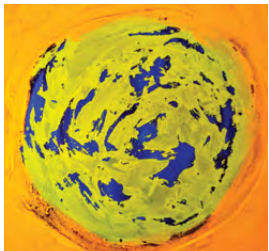
have entry instructions. "Five From Six" exhibit ends Sunday, October 23.

November and December will be our 9th Annual Holiday Boutique (Nov. 3 - Dec. 23).

Go to [www.artcottage.info](http://www.artcottage.info) to submit entries. All are welcome to participate.



Road to Santa Fe by Martin Biro



Opportunity Knocks by Quinlavin



Sierra View by Colin Hall, special guest artist



Still Hungry by George Rammell

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## Recognizing CVCHS Student Achievements

By Jim Scheible, Executive Director



Motivation and encouragement are what drive our students to success here at Clayton Valley Charter High School. However, distance learning under the COVID pandemic has led us to reimagine this approach. It is about finding non-conventional opportunities for our amazing students to showcase their pursuits and achievements.

Historically, it has been important that we celebrate and recognize the outstanding things that our students accomplish – both in their campus life and outside of high school through their personal pursuits. Recognition of our students fosters strong relationships among classmates, families, faculty, and the community. This aids in creating a positive culture where students and families feel valued and welcomed.

At Clayton Valley, a variety of programs and traditions recognize and support student accomplishments. We celebrate student achievements – academically, athletically and as community stewards -- through multiple events on a yearly basis. This year our aim is no different, even though it will look different.

Take, for example, earlier this year in September when we were excited to host our Spring, 2020 Honor Roll ceremony. The purpose of the Honor Roll program is to recognize and honor students who have attained outstanding academic success and to provide positive reinforcement that inspires all students to strive even harder and perform at their highest level in all subjects. It was refreshing to have over 225 students and families back on campus – if even for a moment and one at a time. Congratulations to the honorees and their families on their achievements. These students were celebrated for excelling in the Spring and for maintaining at least a 3.5 GPA through distance learning.



Senior Sydney Francis is recognized with her father at the annual CVCHS Honor Roll ceremony.

I am also pleased to announce financial scholarships for the Class of 2020. Collaborating with the Clayton Business and Community Association, CVCHS raised over \$35,000 and awarded 49 scholarships in the amount of \$500, \$750 and \$1,000. Outside of six \$1,000 awards, scholarships were awarded based on financial need to ensure graduates could access their next step whether it was pursuing higher education or gaining valuable training for the work force. I would like to personally thank those individuals, CVCHS alumni and local businesses who made these awards possible for our students.



Graduate Tien Tran was one of 49 students who received a CVCHS scholarship. She is now attending UC Irvine.

Finally, I would like to share an update on our 2021-22 Open Enrollment Campaign. All new students and families considering enrollment for the next academic school year are invited to join us for our open enrollment process. Starting with the first week of November, CVCHS will be showcasing several online resources including webinars, FAQ sessions and a video tour of our campus and programs. In the past, we have hosted new families on campus for an information night to introduce CVCHS to prospective students and to help parents navigate the open enrollment process.

While we cannot welcome everyone to campus, I am excited about what we have planned and encourage all families to join us online. You can meet our terrific academic support staff, teachers and other team members. Be sure to visit our website as the launch date approaches and we look forward to meeting our future Ugly Eagles!


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RTT helps people overcome life challenges, including physical health issues, infertility, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, weight management, addiction, fears, and phobias.

RTT is a technique for addressing the trauma that clients have been holding onto for many years such as "I am not smart enough," "pretty enough," "lovable," "successful enough," "interesting enough," "wealthy enough," etc., and eliminating it and planting new positive transforming ones. By rapidly rewiring the neural pathways of the brain, RTT replaces negative belief systems and patterns of behavior with new life-affirming beliefs.

The method was developed by internationally renowned therapist Marisa based on 30 years of intensive research. Peer noticed that traditional talk-therapy simply has terribly slow results. She wanted a rapid transformational therapy method.

RTT is a hybrid method. Unlike many hypnotherapy treatments, it does not rely solely on positive reinforcement. RTT therapy gets to the root cause of an issue, liberating the client with understanding and transformative power. You effortlessly break free from what was weighing you down so you can permanently let it go.

RTT does this by successfully working with the subconscious mind. The subconscious is the vault where everything we have learned or experienced is kept. Your memories, events and beliefs that were formed many years ago have shaped how you feel about people and life in general. It is the actual meaning and interpretation that we attach to the events, not the events themselves, that hurts us the most. There lies the answer as to why we react to certain things, feel a certain way, or have a behavior that we cannot explain or understand. This is why we must absolutely address the subconscious.

By listening to our personalized recording for 21 days, clients completely rewire their brain and change the pathways of what they believed about themselves to what they are going to become.

RTT results are extraordinary. The method aims to deliver permanent change in just one to three sessions. It is a solutions-oriented formula, that is all about fixing you and transforming you into the person you would like to be. It absolutely changes lives!

If you are in physical or emotional pain, you want rapid results, there's no better time to break free from life's challenges than today. Call for a FREE RTT initial discovery session at 925-348-7043.

A d v e r t i s e m e n t

## Treat **pain** with vision exercises

By Lisa Vonnegut, CSCS



Is anyone else sick of the word "unprecedented"? Let's face it; our brains love predictability. Being able to identify patterns dramatically increases our chances of survival from an evolutionary perspective. We are experiencing an entire year full of "unprecedented" circumstances. It's no wonder that we feel stressed.

In the hierarchy of inputs that improve the brain's capacity for prediction, vision provides the quickest, most detailed source of information. Vision is an interpretation of inputs driven by the occipital lobe of the brain. The brain's plasticity offers opportunities to improve visual interpretation and improve vision itself, irrespective of eyesight. Anything that improves vision has the potential to lower the brain's perceived risk of threat.

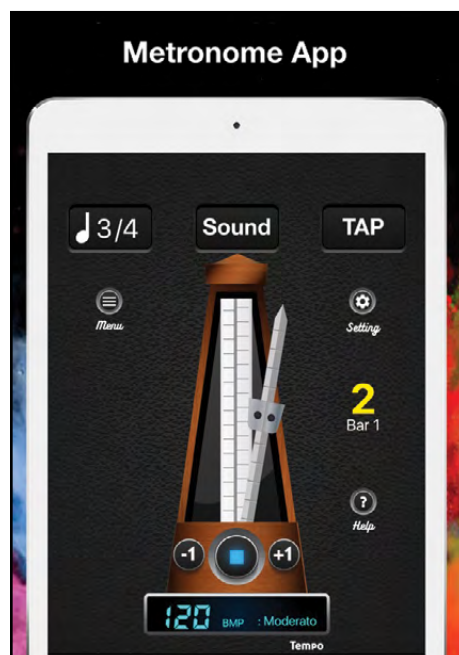
Why is this important? Pain is an action signal sent by the brain as a protective mechanism against threat. Though not always an indicator of tissue damage, pain is always an indicator of some kind of threat. It's a message from your brain to your body that something needs to shift. If reducing threat can reduce pain and improving your vision reduces the threat, vision exercises can have a pain-reducing effect.

**Pick a pain:** Choose something to provide a baseline assessment of your threat level. Are you tight somewhere? Does it hurt to raise your arm above your head? Can you lean over and touch your toes? You can assess anything measurable as a comparison pre- and post- vision drills. A positive assessment means that there is an improvement in range of motion or pain restriction. If it feels or looks the same, then it is not a high payoff drill, as it does not reduce your neural threat level.

Try the following drills:

**Pencil push-ups** - Focus on the tip of a pencil about 12 inches from your nose. Bring it straight into your nose until the image splits, then try to bring the image back into a single point. Slowly bring the pencil back to its starting position. This action creates convergence or brings your eyes in towards each other. Convergence can powerfully activate the midline and improve core stability. You might notice that your back and neck feel less restricted. Reassess your baseline after 3-4 reps.

**Saccades** - The

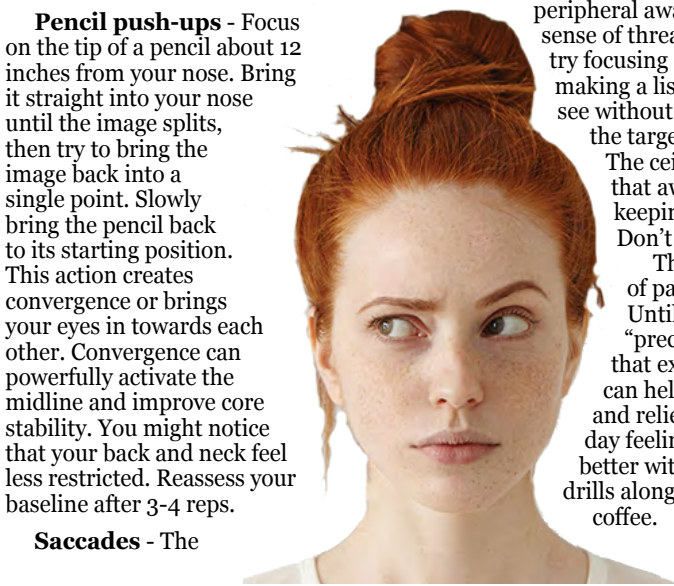


motion of your eyes moving together from R to L and L to R is called a saccade. Set up two visual targets about 18 inches apart at eye level. Using a metronome app on your phone to set a pace, snap your eyes back and forth between the two targets for 30-60 seconds. Saccades activate the frontal lobe, home of the motor cortex and executive functioning. Upregulating the frontal lobe can stimulate better movement and concentration. The result: less threat. Reassess.

**Peripheral vision** - Peripheral vision is the ability to see what you're not looking at directly. Historically, peripheral vision was important to survival because small movements in the periphery could indicate a predator's presence. Too much screen time can train your eyes to not see beyond the screen's framework, reducing your peripheral awareness, and creating a sense of threat. To ameliorate this, try focusing on a visual target and making a list of everything you can see without moving your eyes off the target. Can you see the floor?

The ceiling? Can you bring that awareness as you walk, keeping your eyes on a target? Don't forget to reassess!

The human experience of pain is multifactorial. Until our world becomes "precedented", remember that exercises targeting vision can help reduce neural threat and relieve pain. So, start your day feeling better and moving better with a couple of vision drills along with your morning coffee.



## West Nile Virus found in Concord

Two sentinel chickens and three more dead birds have recently tested positive for West Nile Virus prompting Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District to urge residents to take precautions.

So far this year, 11 groups of mosquitoes, 15 dead birds and the two sentinel chickens have tested positive for the virus in Contra Costa County.

The eastern part of the county has seen most of the West Nile Virus activity thus far. "The first positive bird of the year was from Martinez. Now, with a bird from Concord, it's an important reminder that West Nile virus is not restricted to just one part of Contra Costa County," said district Scientific Program Director Steve Schutz.

Two people in the county have been diagnosed with the virus so far this year, according to the state department of public health.

Since 2005, 70 people in Contra Costa County have been diagnosed with West Nile virus. In 2006, two people died from the

disease.

Both chickens recently found with the virus

were from the Holland Tract in East Contra Costa County. Some infected birds, especially crows and jays, are known to get sick and die from the disease.

When a mosquito bites an infected bird, the mosquito can become infected and transmit the virus to another bird or a person

through a mosquito bite.

Repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus are recommended when going outdoors.

Swimming pools and fountains should be chlorinated and filtered because just one neglected pool can produce up to 1 million mosquitoes and affect people several miles away, district officials said.

Residents can reduce risk of the virus by dumping or draining standing water, since the insects develop from egg to adult in water.



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# THE LEGAL PAGE



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

## Power

### and the Word of the Law

Local government goes through the same gauntlet of attacks for having written laws and for the way they are enforced the same way that Washington and the Constitution is constantly batted about. The arguments of what the author(s) intended, what the legislative body passed, and what was executed in the field is a constant dynamic of often conflicts in our community. Having been in game design, you write the rules of the game that is expected to be very precise in execution during the play of the game. In government and in the real world, precision is not often obtainable.

In the actual making of the codes, I look to get support from my colleagues and I do not care why they want to vote for it. Nor do I care what they think it will be like. I just want it voted for. And I feel that my motivation or my concept behind "the intent" is also particularly irrelevant. All laws are the result of a collective action by the legislative body. The exercise of power in the word of the law is in its implementation.

For example, we have a rule about helmets when riding bikes and skateboards. Do we constantly arrest and cite kids at the skate park for violation? Sometimes, warnings are given, but most of the time, no.

Richmond City has a law against Alien Space Weapons over the city (not kidding here folks) but implementation is not carried out, though the Mayor will tell you there has been no reports of violations so far. The relationship between their power to enforce and their laws as written is in direct conflict. The opposite can also apply where the Power is overwhelming and is applied regardless of what the words of the law are.

To understand the relationships between Power and the Word of the Law on a grander scale, let us take the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution which

goes back to the 1790's. Hordes of people will say it was the intent that people should be allowed to have guns. Now, imagine it is 1790 and a group of people go to a gun shop and says we want to buy 10 rifles, 3 kegs of gunpowder, cartridges and bullets. Sounds reasonable under the Second Amendment, right? Sure. Now assume they happen to also be slaves. There is nothing in the 2nd amendment that restricts that sale. How do you think it went? Did their constitutional rights not exist? Of course, they did not exist because under the power implementation of the law, it was taken for granted that it did not apply to them regardless of the word of the law.

This is why one of the DUTIES of the legislative branch in cooperation with the population is to put into reasonable relationship the rules as written and the power that sits with them in the implementation of that.

We see this locally in conflicts over unsheltered persons on private or restricted public property. And in reasonable speed enforcement where we do not write up everyone who is one mile an hour over the limit (except probably in New Jersey when you are driving with a New York license plate, but that is another aspect of the relationship between power and the word of the law).

So, remember when you look at laws, you have to take into account how they are enforced. That tells you more and is far more important than anything the author may have intended.

*PS. Edi Birsan is writing as his own individual and not as a City Council member of Concord or an escaped unindicted co-conspirator from the New Jersey State troopers along highway 80 out of New York City.*



**legalbriefs**

by Douglas A. Prutton, Attorney  
Personal Injury Labor & Employment Law  
email: [Doug@PruttonLaw.com](mailto:Doug@PruttonLaw.com)

## Are employees empowered to police their employers?

Derrick Downtrodden enters the lawyer's conference room, taps elbows with the lawyer, and they exchange greetings through their masks. (Or maybe they just logged onto Zoom or talked on the phone).

"I understand you're having some problems at work," the lawyer probes, "how can I help?"

Inhaling deeply and dramatically, Derrick bursts forth with a litany of complaints about his employment at Concord Cremation Company. "We don't get any freaking breaks," Derrick pleads, "it's just feed the ovens, feed the ovens, all day long."

"Our paychecks are usually late, we have nowhere to sit, we aren't paid any overtime, our wage statements make no sense, we have to pay for our own uniforms and supplies, and ... well working there just sucks," Derrick summarizes.

Stroking his chin and nodding his head, the lawyer pretends to empathize while pondering to himself - "how can I make some money out of this?" (Even I like lawyer jokes).

Seriously, the lawyer explains to Derrick that everything that Derrick has described violates the law. He explains that not only can Derrick make claims for himself, he can represent all employees of Concord Cremation in seeking to recover penalties against the company for these violations.

This type of representative action is based on The California Private Attorney General Act (it is called a PAGA claim or action), which became law in 2004. Before this law, only the State of California (through the Labor and Workforce Development Agency - LWDA) could go after employers for penalties. Because the LWDA could not keep up with this work, PAGA was created to empower all employees to act as a "private attorney general" - the employee sues the employer as if the employee is the LWDA. In other words,

all aggrieved employees are empowered by PAGA to police their own employers!

In a PAGA action, 75% of the penalties recovered from the employer are paid to the LWDA and 25% are paid to the aggrieved employees. Attorneys bringing PAGA claims typically are paid by receiving a percentage (often around 1/3) of the total recovery. The amount of the penalties depends on the particular law that was broken and the amount of the employees involved. For example, for "seating violations," the penalty is \$100.00 for the first violation and \$200.00 for each subsequent violation. These penalties can add up to a considerable sum.

The Court in Contra Costa County just recently approved a PAGA settlement involving cashiers at Petco who claimed that they were not provided with seating at the cash registers - the case settled for a little over one million dollars.

In another case, the court in Contra Costa County recently approved a \$100,000.00 PAGA settlement involving 11 nurses who claimed failure to pay overtime, failure to provide itemized wage statements, failure to reimburse required expenses, and failure to provide wages when due.

The statute of limitations for a PAGA claim is only one year, meaning that penalties can only be sought for the one year period before the filing of the lawsuit. Thus, it is crucial to act promptly. PAGA is a powerful tool in California for employees. It is becoming more popular every year - in 2019 over 6,000 PAGA actions were commenced. Maybe Derrick's PAGA claim will be the next.

*All names and incidents referenced in this article are fictitious. No identification with actual persons (living or deceased) or places, is intended or should be inferred.*

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## Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

### Bernard: "October is Adopt-a-Dog Month"

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

The whole month of October is Adopt-a-Dog Month which brings to mind Bernard. Bernard is a 10-year-old toy poodle/terrier mix. This poor guy was found as a stray in San Francisco. He was very scared and fearful at the shelter, but he is comfortable with his trainer. So even though he may need time to settle in, with love, patience, and understanding, he will likely easily bond with his adopter.

Bernard is:

- In need of an experienced dog owner
- Good on leash
- Making progress on being housebroken
- Good with certain other dogs
- Looking for a quiet home without children

Bernard's ideal owner would be a single woman with dog experience. He is fearful of men. This traumatized boy is ready to find a permanent home. His adoption fee is \$250. The only way to see him is to fill out an application and make an appointment. (<https://www.norcalpoodlerescue-adoption.com/adoption-form>) Bernard's adopters must live in Northern California.

NorCal Poodle Rescue is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3). In addition to tax-deductible donations, you can support their rescue efforts by donating your car, sponsoring a poodle, or volunteering to photograph the dogs so potential adopters can fall in love. Assistance is needed in Concord and elsewhere in the SF Bay Area. For more information email them at [norcalpoodlerescueinc@gmail.com](mailto:norcalpoodlerescueinc@gmail.com).

**Pawsitive Pet Tips.** October is also National Animal Safety and Prevention Month. If your pet isn't already micro-chipped, make an appointment with the vet and get one. Lost pets can be easily found and returned if they are micro-chipped. Pet identification tags are also key to being reunited with a lost pet. Include your cell phone number on the tag in case you are out looking for your

pet when whoever finds it calls. Keep the Poison Control Number for your pet in your phone contacts 855-764-7661 (Do it now!). Having a disaster escape plan in case you ever need to evacuate your pets quickly from the home is crucial, especially during wildfire season. Have a "Go Bag" of food, food and water bowls, a Pet First Aid Kit (including pre-scribed medicines), a current photo of your pet(s), a list of pet-friendly hotels, vaccination records (these may be required by hotels), poop bags, and an extra collar and leash. Be advised that some pet-friendly hotels have a weight limit for dogs or restricts the number of pets per room.

Boneheads. Abuse of helpless animals is one of the most despicable crimes, but sometimes justice is served. In March of this year, Antioch resident Garry Reynolds, the owner of a dog training company, NorCal K9, was found guilty of four felony counts of animal cruelty. Nine dogs were removed from his property after rotten raw chicken meat was found in various dogs' kennels. The animals were kept in stagnant hot rooms. In addition, urine and feces had not been picked up or disposed of in a sanitary manner. Some of the animals were housed in small rooms or the kitchen in stacked kennels all close together. Poor ventilation and an immense amount of trash stored inside and outside the house was also noted. Reynolds' conviction was based on the treatment of four dogs: Gunner, a Doberman; Favor, a Cane Corso; Zeus, a German Shepherd; and Rambo (Bo), a Labradoodle.

*Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram/TikTok celebrity with approximately 143,000 followers on Instagram.com/ruby-dooby\_\_Do and 653,000 Tik Tok followers. This column is written by Jill Hedgecock. Her novels From Shadow's Perspective and Between Shadow's Eyes feature Ruby on the cover [www.jillhedgecock.com](http://www.jillhedgecock.com).*



## ARF Adoption Stars Hubba Bubba & Mercury

by Cole Kuiper

Looking for a furry friend during this trying time? Good news — ARF is now offering a no-contact virtual adoption process! If you see an animal you are interested in on our website. Go to [www.arflife.org](http://www.arflife.org) and fill out an online inquiry form. Once your inquiry has been received, you will be added to our virtual adoption queue.

### Hubba Bubba



Seven-year-old Hubba Bubba is a dashing gentleman looking for his happily ever after. He wants nothing more than to spend his days being a couch potato and being side by side with his person. He's looking for the perfect companion who will give him attention, daily snuggles and endless love.

The adoption fee for puppies (<6 months) is \$350, for adult dogs is \$250,

and senior dogs (7+ years) and special needs dogs are 50% off the adoption fee.

### Mercury



Two-year-old Mercury is a handsome and friendly boy. He approaches new people with ease and likes to lean into them for pets. He is curious and likes to sniff and explore his surroundings. He would also enjoy having an assortment of toys to play with.

The adoption fee for kittens (<6 months) is \$150, for adult cats is \$100, \$25 off each for multiple cats/kittens, and senior cats (7+ years) and special needs cats are 50% off the adoption fee.

### WORD SEARCH PLUS PLAY BALL!

Answer from pg. 8: "Neon" Deion Sanders

On September 5, 1989, Sanders hit a home run for the NY Yankees and followed up on September 9 with a 68-yard touchdown return for the Atlanta Falcons. Sanders played for SF 49ers in 1994 and SF Giants in 1995.

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

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



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