



# BACK(?) TO SCHOOL 2020-2021



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## from the Publisher ~David King

### Grants and other Concord Business

In response to the opportunity to help Small Business by the CARE Act the City of Concord applied \$650,000 to 130 businesses. The Grants attracted 289 applicants and were sorted by priority tiers with 32 falling into the first tier priority which included restaurants, leaving 98 positions for Tier 2. There were 106 that fell outside of the tiers leaving 98 to be selected by a random method of the remaining 151. The City of Concord used the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce to administer this under the direction of the City Economic and Development staff. The list is posted on our website. Congratulations to all those who received their \$5,000 grant.

In other business activity, Concord's 2nd oldest running restaurant Sugar Plum Coffee Shop was sold at the beginning of the pandemic. They are managing to combat the pandemic restrictions by teaming up with neighbor La Fritanguera Nicaraguan Cuisine and set up a very nice outdoor dining area in the back parking lot.

Perry's Knife and Tactical, the county's largest knife store, has moved its location to closer to downtown. It is now located at 1815 Broadway St., near the Dollar Tree.



Gabriela Freitag, owner of Alpine Bakery, is excited having installed new patio set up. Now we can all enjoy her buns outside.

Berto's has opened in the Dickies BBQ location in the Ygnacio Valley Shopping Center. Berto's is offering Filipino and American Cuisine. You can get your Filipino or American BBQ meats with a house-made side of lumpia or adobo wings. We wish owner Albert Gomez a fast start up.

We are real excited that Concord's Thai restaurant, Yum Squared and the Parkside Bar and Grill, both located downtown at Todos Santos Square and both having opened during the pandemic, have been welcomed with open arms or should I say mouths, as they are doing as well as can be expected during these times.

Speaking of Todos Santos, the Todos Santos Business Association was exploring the idea of closing the streets of Grant, Salvio and Mr. Diablo around the plaza to provide more space for outdoor seating for those restaurants. The word is, that is not going to happen. After talking to the various business owners, the feedback to TSBA was that those who have already made accommodations for outdoor seating are happy with what they have, and the others did not want to sacrifice their parking.



Outdoor seating area for Sugar Plum Coffee Shop and La Fritanguera



the concordian

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

## Wooing the Casual Voter in a Presidential Year

Our nation faces the most serious election since 1860 where the very soul of the nation appears to be on the ballot before a highly divided electorate. But in local elections, we are faced with what many called the return of Silly Season.

In some cities, local politics is a blood sport with vicious attacks on the character of the other. In others, it is more akin to a beauty contest where there is not a hair of difference in policy or position that greatly motivates the electorate.

The reality is when it comes to local elections, the electorate has a large segment that is politely referred to as Casual Voters. The size of this segment varies when affected by a major scandal or a single burning issue. In general, these are the voters who made the effort to make a stand and are very clear on who they want or do not want for President, but when it comes down to the Park District, they are staring at a name, and a ballot designation (job), and a rank listing and feel compelled to vote knowing near nothing about the contest. Whom or what they vote for may very well be the influence of subtle bias.

### The Ballot-rank Bias

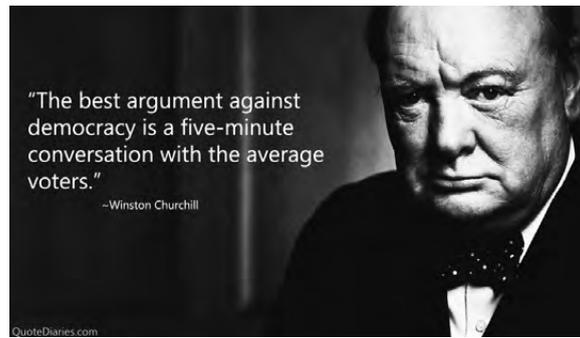
Political analysis will tell you that the first position in the order has an edge of at least 1%. In a long list of choices, the bias favors first position, second position, and last position in that order.

Rank bias is even more prominent in primary races for things like political central committees where first place ranking can be a 5% or more benefit.

### The Ballot Job Designation Bias

Did you ever see "Used Car Salesman" or "Unemployed" as a job ballot designation? Generally, when it comes to special districts there is an appeal to careers that relate. A nurse or doctor is favored in a health district, a teacher in a school district, an engineer in others with some exceptions. I have often joked that for the Central Sanitation District maybe 'politician' would be a field match.

In the city council races, classically, teachers have an edge over lawyers. In 2010, I was caught by surprise by the designation of Police Chaplain. Considering the current national focus on police, what was then a very high attractor most probably not so much today, yet still a plus. Certain designations appeal more to Democrats than Republicans. Businessman appeals more to Republicans, but Small Business Operator pulls in plus marks from Democrats.



"The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voters."

~Winston Churchill

### The Gender Bias

Gender is important to the casual voter with perception that women voters tend to favor women more. I have heard women say they always vote for a woman by default. I have never heard a man say the opposite, but there is plenty of evidence that for most of the 20th Century, there was a strong anti-woman bias amongst male voters. In local elections, the anti-bias is greatly reduced, but the pro-bias remains and appears to be growing.

### The Name Bias

For the casual voter, ethnic identification plays a role. In the election following 9-11, do you think you got a boost as Muhammad or as Bob? Tons of cities were sued on the basis of racially profiled voting and forced to go to district elections because ethnic/racial voting patterns showed a bias for or against certain ethnic/races.

Name recognition is a big factor in local casual voters, thus the sign wars in local elections. An empty lot may not have any voters, but it sure does attract a lot of attention from candidates who want their supporters to see their names.

### The Incumbent Bias

There is a pro- and anti-incumbent vote block in every local election. In Concord, for the last 20 years the anti-incumbent is about 23% amongst the casual voters. This is then divided by the number of challengers which is one of the reasons that the more challengers there are, the more likely the incumbent will win in a low intensity race.

The battle lines on 'issues' in local elections are many times intentionally blurred by candidates so as to not give someone a reason to vote against the candidate and an attempt to put more into the casual voter where the above factors can play. One of the major roles of political parties is to give their casual voters the motivation to ignore the above and vote with the party which has already vetted the candidates on their positions relative to their values.

## Mike's Auto Gives 90th Car to Military Veteran

On August 11, Mike's auto presented a refurbished vehicle to Kristina Crawford, a military veteran and single mother with two children when she received a 2018 Chevy Malibu as part of our 20-year-old Benevolence Program. Since 2000, Mike's has been giving cars to deserving people and this presentation put the total number at 90.

The Malibu was donated by Hertz Rent-A-Car and sponsored by High Mountain Heroes, a non-profit organization that provides outdoor adventures to disabled military veterans who have returned from deployment with physical or emotional scars.

The award ceremony was held outside Moresi's Chophouse in Clayton. "We feel very fortunate to be involved with such a wonderful program and are very excited to be able to give back to the area communities that have supported us for the past 48 years." owner Mike Rose said.



"After receiving hundreds of applications over the years and reading the heart-breaking stories, we only wish that we could do more."

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# Clayton Valley is back to school

By Jim Scheible, Executive Director

Each year, the back to school season brings some anxiety balanced with a ton of excitement for both new and returning students. This year is no different, albeit the new COVID-19 pandemic protocols in place, making for a very unique first day of school. Despite the challenges, Clayton Valley students, families and staff have risen to the occasion. I am greatly encouraged by the resolve of our school community as we collectively face today's uncertainty with grit and determination.

In preparation for this fall, CVCHS hosted multiple webinars over the summer with students, families and staff, as well as providing our Governing Board with monthly updates. Feedback from all stakeholder groups provided valuable information for finalizing our plans for the fall, while also ensuring our program followed state guidelines.

The planning and feedback have paid off with a great start to the school year. While we pushed the start of school back by a week, everyone has risen to the occasion, gradually ramping up to full speed. The delayed start allowed extra time for planning and support for all members of the CVCHS community.

The results clearly show that CVCHS made the right move. To date, almost 99% of students and families have completed our walk-thru registration. This allowed students to have their textbooks before school started. In addition, over 600 students checked out chromebooks to support their at home learning. The extra time also allowed CVCHS to host grade-level orientations for all students and families. Over 98% of students completed their orientation on their assigned day. This, in a school with an enrollment of

almost 2,300, is a testament to our students' desire to get back to school.

CVCHS is in compliance with the State of California's requirement that all schools in Contra Costa County start the 2020-21 school year with distance learning due to the County's placement on the State's COVID-19 watch list. However, learning online does not mean the expectations for what students learn has changed. CVCHS is excited to roll out its new instructional model for 2020-21, which is far improved from what was implemented this past spring.

The model we have established for the school year ensures our students receive up to 205 minutes a week of synchronous (real-time) learning with each teacher. This is the most for a high school in the Bay Area, from what we could find, and speaks to our teachers' commitment to their students' success. The schedule also allows for students to receive differentiated assistance as needed. This support extends beyond academics to include counseling, clubs, activities, athletics and additional social emotional supports accessible to students and families.

In addition to the strong distance learning program CVCHS has implemented, we are also looking forward to having our students return to campus as soon as possible. While the conditions in Contra Costa County and the greater Bay Area are beyond our control, we are already working on our plans for welcoming students back to campus under new health and safety procedures that will ensure we maximize in person learning.

Despite the challenges, I am confident that our school community will remain Ugly Strong and make the 2020-21 one of the most memorable on record.

## Views of the Valley

Photos by Micah



A mother bobcat and cub were spotted getting a drink from a backyard fountain in Clayton. Photo by Bill Yarborough



On a beautiful day at the Martinez Marina, one man fishes while an eagle kite preys on a fish kite.



A Zoom Town Hall on homeless attracts Concord support agencies that could relieve police of some responsibilities and funding.



The staff at Clayton Valley Charter High School prepare for the opening of the school year getting students their textbooks and chromebooks were checked to support home learning.



White Pony Express volunteers and workers assemble food kits for the launch of the Blessings Project.



Welcome heat relief! Kona ice truck made an appearance in the former KMart's parking lot on Clayton Rd.

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## The Ruth Bancroft Garden Virtual Gala honors curator of 40 years

The Garden will host its first ever Virtual Gala and honor their world-renowned curator and succulent specialist, Brian Kemble, for his 40 years of service to Ruth Bancroft and her extraordinary public garden.

Kemble first met Ruth Bancroft in



Brian Kemble collecting pollen

1979 on a visit to her fast-growing, seven-year old garden, when he was a budding horticulturist. She soon invited him to come work with her in her 3.5 acre dry garden experiment. They bonded over

succulents and the spirit of discovery, collaborating in Ruth's ambitious venture of trying out plants from all over the world, to see how they would fare in this particular place.

Kemble raised all sorts of dry-growing plants from seed and added his own unique hybrids to the mix. Ruth acquired plants from many sources, but more of the garden's plants came from Kemble than from anywhere else. Ruth Bancroft's plant collection and unusual bold garden design began to draw international attention by the late 1980s and has continued to draw admiring visitors to this day, surpassing 20,000 visitors this past year.

"Little did I know, on my first short visit to the garden in 1979, how large a role it was going to play in my life, Kemble says. "It has been a joy to see so many plants progress from tiny seedlings to flowering specimens, appreciated by visitors from all over the world."

This is the Garden's largest fundraiser of the year, helping to preserve Ruth's collection, and educate the public about the great beauty and environmental benefits of drought tolerant landscapes. The Virtual Gala, which will be broadcast from 5-6 PM, will feature live and



Ruth with Aloe and Agave ferox, 1985

videotaped presentations by Kemble and many devoted members and staff of the Garden. There will also be live auction bidding to support the Garden's Children's Education program, and reconstruction of its almost 50-year-old "Ruth's Folly" complex of gazebo and greenhouses.

The Garden is also having an online auction featuring numerous one-of-a-kind items and exclusive Garden experiences from Sept. 11 – 20th,

Anyone can attend. Register on their website, [www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/gala2020](http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/gala2020). There is a fee of \$10 to register for the Gala, but all attendees will receive a \$10 Garden Nursery certificate as a thank you for coming after the event.



Building the Folly

For additional information, Email questions to: [gala@ruthbancroftgarden.org](mailto:gala@ruthbancroftgarden.org) or call the Garden at (925) 944-9352. The Ruth Bancroft Garden, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) organization.



Ruth's Folly gazebo and greenhouses



**Jennifer Stojanovich**  
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

## There's never been a better time to sell

What strange times we live in. Even though we're still in the midst of a global pandemic and an economic downturn, our housing market is strong. This has come as a surprise to many – especially those who want to sell their homes. Many home sellers have been understandably hesitant to put their homes on the market during these conditions. But the reality is that there's never been a better time to sell your home. Here's why.

Since lockdown restrictions have eased in many locations, demand for housing has picked up. In fact, you could say that homebuyers are flooding the market especially in smaller cities and the suburbs such as Clayton or Concord. Homebuyers who put off their home searches in the early spring during the beginning of the pandemic are now back. And those whose needs have changed are also entering the market.

With all the pent-up demand, there is also a shortage of inventory. There are more buyers in the market than there are homes for sale. In 2019, inventory was down. Now a year later, the shortage of inventory is even more pronounced. Obviously, some sellers have been reticent to list because of the pandemic. But we're also seeing fewer distressed homes on the market because of the federal economic stimulus support including mortgage forbearance and

additional unemployment benefits. Some sellers have even experienced bidding wars, to helping them get the best possible price for their homes.

With the combination of high demand and low inventory, home prices have held steady and even increased since before the coronavirus pandemic. According to the National Association of Realtors, median home prices have increased 7.7 percent. This is excellent news for sellers who many worried that the pandemic would cause a drop in home prices.

What's feeding the demand? Current mortgage rates - they are at all-time lows. According to Freddie Mac, average interest rates have hit a record low of just over three percent. Buyers with excellent credit may even qualify for interest rates just under three percent. This means that buyers could potentially save thousands of dollars over the life of the loan. As a result, buyers continue to be attracted to the market.

The economy is picking back up. While it's true that the U.S. has experienced high rates of unemployment because of the pandemic, recent data suggests that the economy is picking back up. Businesses are beginning to reopen and adding back jobs. Consumers are starting to spend again. Even though it will take time for the country to completely recover from the economic downturn, it is heading in the right direction.

Courtesy [virtualresults.net](http://virtualresults.net).



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# District 2 candidates square off in virtual debate

By Richard Eber



Carlyn Obringer



Harmesh Kumar



Hope Johnson



Paul Wood



Tristan Piper

In the communications challenged Covid-19 environment, candidates in local elections are finding it difficult to reach voters. Deprived for the moment of being able to conduct door to door canvassing, they must rely on utilizing social media or sending out costly fliers through the mail as the foundation of their campaigns.

This is especially true in Concord's 2nd District where incumbent City Council member Carlyn Obringer is facing a challenge from Harmesh Kumar, Hope Johnson, Paul Wood, and Tristan Piper. Each of these individuals are trying to communicate their stands on local issues to residents of their District.

Attempting to assist in educating voters, longtime Concord resident Tim Carr, President of Sun Terrace Neighborhood Partnership, (STNP), has organized a debate that was heard last Monday, August 31.

According to Carr, "Each election cycle, our neighborhood association organizes a live event for residents to hear those running for City Council seats explain why they should be elected to office. By conducting this "virtual debate" we tried to perform a similar service to what we normally do."

To assist Carr with putting on the August 31st function, Dave Hughes worked on the technical logistics with Zoom and Facebook to make sure the debate could be heard by District 2 residents and other interested parties in Concord. Jeanette Green and Susan Metzger worked alongside Carr on formulating questions and taking turns moderating the debate.

Working within the parameters of giving equal opportunity to each candidate, opening remarks, answers to questions and rebuttals were formatted in 2-minute segments. Carr said he wanted to make sure this event was "conducted in a non-partisan way" consistent with the manor that the STNP conducts their business."

For those who might have missed the debate, it can be seen on Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoP8IZ6FGsw&t=5813s>. For our part the Diablo Gazette asked each candidate three questions pertaining to defunding police services, Housing, and the future of the Concord Naval Weapons Station project. Their responses are attached:

## What is your position defunding, refining, and/or changing law enforcement in Concord?

**Obringer:** I support re-imagining policing so social workers/mental health professionals are deployed to service calls that may not require a conventional police presence. We on the Council have already initiated a conversation to solicit community feedback. A community advisory body could serve as a liaison between residents and Concord PD leadership.

**Johnson:** My public position to Council for years is Concord cannot continue spending almost 60% of its budget on the police department or other city needs will further deteriorate. The police budget and responsibilities must be reviewed to determine what might be more effectively handled by social services or other departments.

**Wood:** I am for providing our Police

more diversity training to handle diverse situations with appropriate force. I am pro-body cameras on law enforcement officers to help hold them accountable to their actions. I have family that are Police officers and know that it is a very stressful job. Police officers are in very high intensity situations and have to make very fast decisions. I respect the tough job that Police officers do every day and put their lives at risk to protect us.

**Piper:** The Concord Police Department deserves respect and financial support. I am against any calls to defund first responders who risk their lives on a daily basis. The budget should be evaluated by how efficiently funds are utilized, not for the sake of following a politically charged agenda.

**Kumar:** We do need police to protect people and property. However, some tasks officers are performing, they are not qualified to perform like dealing with mentally ill and homelessness. We need to rethink allocating some police department resources for mental health services, to reduce homelessness and stop our kids from getting into prison pipelines especially minority kids.

## What actions would you like the City Council to make pertaining to housing policy and implementing rent control in our community?

**Kumar:** . The City can repurpose vacant land (change zoning laws) to allow for multi-family development. The City can also make it easier and or facilitate the permits to allow for the addition of units to existing single family homes. These are commonly known as in law units. Promote or encourage affordable housing development opportunities in and around the City.

**Piper:** I support basic rent control for multi-family dwellings in the City of Concord. We should ensure annual rent increases are limited while creating incentives for landlords to make improvements. Rent should only increase as it correlates to the cost of living or operation.

**Wood:** I am for rent control and affordable housing. Every new housing structure built should help to fund affordable housing solutions to keep our community diverse and people sheltered in permanent housing. I am not a fan of encampments for homeless or moving them out. We need to have shelters and long term housing for those in need.

**Johnson:** Concord needs its own rent stabilization and just cause eviction legislation to promote housing stabilization, especially for essential workers. Had this been done before the pandemic, we would not be rushing to plan now, which is not good public policy. We need to pursue ways to finance building affordable housing.

**Obringer:** I support California's recently enacted rent control and just cause eviction legislation. In response to the pandemic, I joined my Council colleagues in passing a rent increase/eviction moratorium. Our measure, enacted before state action, has been extended multiple times and has some of California's most extensive rent payback

provisions.

## Following the impasse of the City Council and Lennar to proceed with the development of the Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) earlier this year, how should this project proceed in the future?

**Johnson:** Because the Building Trades and Lennar couldn't reach a PLA agreement at the CNWS, Concord has a second chance to select a trustworthy developer. My public position to Council for years was that partnering with a known bad actor would negatively affect all other aspects of the p1.

**Piper:** As a self-funded candidate, it is unlikely I will abstain from votes of this magnitude, as my opponent did for CNWS. I am a 31 year resident of district 2, and support home builders that secure Concord Zoning approval to develop CNWS land. Post COVID-19 business partnerships will be crucial.

**Kumar:** I do not have a vision for the Concord NWS project because the City of Concord has spent more than \$14 million dollars on that project and that has yet to come to fruition. What I can say is that \$14

million could have been very well spent in revitalizing the Downtown area of Concord to make it more attractive to businesses or visitors. Or the City could have built a convection center to host events here in the City which in turn would attract more business to local businesses.

**Obringer:** I have led the push for a community-driven, sustainable, world-class project at the former CNWS. When the Council selects a new developer in 2021, I want to be there to ensure that the new development partner will support working men and women and invest in our community for the long-term.

**Wood:** First, City Council needs to comply with the US Navy to clean up the new chemicals found on the site and protect the near extinct wildlife known to be on the property. It is expected this could take two to three more years. I am an environmentalist and animal lover at heart. The solutions decided upon for this land need to promote clean industry, parks, hiking trails, dog parks, solutions for learning, and commerce that are eco-friendly.



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## JOURNEYMAN'S JOURNAL

by Jill Hedgecock

# Calaveras Big Trees State Park: More than a Walk in the Woods

Many Californians are probably unaware that the Golden State is home to the largest living organism on Earth. No, it's not a whale or a Sierra redwood tree (which holds the record as the tallest life form). It's *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, more commonly known as the giant sequoia tree. This marvel of nature resides a mere 3-hour drive from the Bay Area. Although a visit can be managed as a day trip, my family opted for a longer stay, setting up



Calaveras Big trees towers over Kelly Hedgecock

base camp in Dorrington at the dog-friendly The Bluebird House, a cozy three-bedroom cabin rental we booked through vacasa.com. Our location was a short jaunt to Calaveras Big Trees (CBT) State Park for some sightseeing and hiking, Murphys to enjoy small town restaurants and wine-tasting, Arnold Rim Trail for more hiking, and to Alpine Lake and Spicer Meadow Reservoir to include water recreation activities.

Calaveras Big Trees (CBT) State Park is located 3 miles east of Arnold off of Highway 4 and houses the largest protected stand of sequoia trees on State lands. It is open from sunrise to sunset and offers an abundance of recreational activities including birdwatching, hiking, camping, fishing, and picnicking. The park supports seven maintained "hiking only" trails and two large campgrounds. No dogs are allowed on the hiking trails, but leashed pets are acceptable on CBT campgrounds. Although the visitor center is currently closed, the gift shop is open (number of shoppers in the store are regulated and masks are required).

We hiked the 1.7 mile North Grove Trail on a Monday in early August. Highlights included the big stump where dances and bowling were once held, the Empire State tree with its 30 foot girth, and the tragic story of Mother of the Forest (667BC – 1856AD).

This was not my first visit to CBT, but it was the first time I've been there without viewing the iconic drive-through tree which was created in the 1880s as a tourist attraction (better known as the Pioneer Cabin Tree). Sadly, this 1,000 year old gem toppled in 2017 due to severe weather. The remains of the tree can still be found at marker 21 on the North Grove Trail.

CBT would probably not exist if not for Desire Fricot. In 1900, lumberman Robert P. Whiteside purchased the grove. Under public pressure by preservationists such as Fricot, CBT was placed into the state park system in 1931. Today, CBT is home to at least four bears, numerous bird species, chipmunks, and chickarees (squirrels). Like many of the remarkable species on earth, human influence and climate change are a major threat to the largest living organism on the planet. Based on data from three different groves, reproduction during the last century is too low for the long-term survival of the sequoia.

COVID-19 seems to have created a rare opportunity to potentially avoid summer crowds at this popular destination. I can't attest to the number of people at CBT on the weekends, but we encountered only about 25 other tourists. Masks and social



Murphy's Hotel

distancing are encouraged. While only some of the people were mask-compliant during our visit, since it wasn't crowded, we could maintain safe social distancing.

CBT is well-staffed due in large part to the strong volunteer-base provided by the Calaveras Big Trees Association ([www.bigtrees.org](http://www.bigtrees.org)) which manages the gift shop, junior rangers, trail crews and puts on seminars, tours and workshops. CBT is a Must-See. Check the website for any updates on COVID-19 restrictions before making the drive ([https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=551](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=551)).

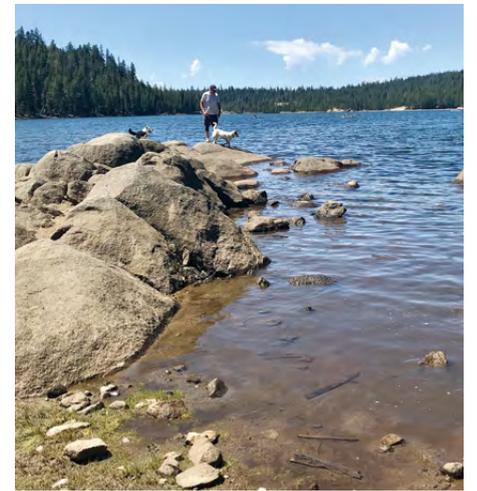
Hiking. In addition to the many trails at CBT, Calaveras is flush with hiking opportunities. Arnold Rim Trail, accessed from White Pines near the Logging Museum, offers a shady, paved trek for the first mile. Those wishing for more of a challenge can keep going for stunning vistas but be prepared to tackle some challenging elevation changes. Dogs are permitted on leash. The outdoor logging museum features a locomotive and other big equipment and is worth exploring.

We found a wonderful hike off the beaten track near Spicer Meadow Reservoir. A scenic hike can be found past the dam along Highland Creek. There's a single picnic bench (which ensures social distancing) but be aware the current is quite strong and not good for swimming.

Wine-Tasting and Dining in Murphys. Murphys was established in 1848 when John and Daniel Murphy set up a trading



Kelly Hedgecock atop a sequoia stump



Alpine Lake



Highland Creek

post and gold mining operation in the village that is now their namesake. For such a small community, this sleepy town has a rich history. In addition to being visited by President Grant, Mark Twain, and outlaws Joaquin Murietta and Black Bart. Albert Michelson, the first American Nobel Prize winner for his invention of optical precision instruments, grew up there.

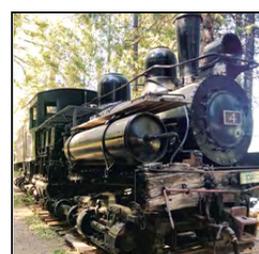
Today, this charming, Gold Rush era town, is known for its wineries. We chose to visit Milliare, Ironstone, and Hovey Wineries out of the many options. Milliare offers a white flight which we enjoyed on their shady creekside patio. Hovey has a shady picnic atmosphere and sits adjacent to the outdoor seating for Murphy's Pourhouse, where we had an excellent lunch. Ironstone Vineyards is a short jaunt from downtown but worth the drive to visit their elegant gardens. Be aware that due to COVID restrictions, advance wine-tasting reservations are required and stays are limited to 45 minutes. We mostly dined at the Bluebird cabin, but one evening we got take-out from Murphy's Grille. Their pasta dishes were delicious.

Water Recreation. Alpine Lake offers swimming, fishing, kayaking, and paddle boarding opportunities. Rentals can be found along the western shore. The eastern shore is less populated and permits off-leash dogs. Spicer Meadow Reservoir has a boat ramp for sailboats. Kayaks are also permitted. No motorized crafts are allowed.

Calaveras has so much more to offer than a walk in the woods. If you've never seen the largest living organism on the planet, consider scheduling a visit to explore this wonderful destination.



Spicer Reservoir



Wine tasting, a museum with the world's largest pencil, and a historical locomotives are just a few of the fascinating sights.

# CLAYCORD® NEWS & TALK

## In case you missed it...

### BART announces new "Text BART Police" Initiative

The BART Police Department is launching a new initiative to help riders request assistance from officers. "Text BART Police" allows riders, employees and other individuals in the BART system to directly contact the BART Police Department dispatch. The number for Text BART Police is (510) 200-0992. The line will be in operation 24 hours per day and seven days per week. Individuals can also use the feature to send pictures to police. BART officials said the feature should be used for non-emergency reports. Anyone with an emergency is will urged to call 911 or contact their train operator.

The city will save an estimated \$38,500 by not holding the election, according to city spokesperson Gayle Vassar.



**Dozens of goats clear the canal area near DVC in Pleasant Hill**  
Thanks to Ryan P. for this great picture.



### New Express Lane On I-680 In Walnut Creek Opens A Year Early

A new carpool lane on southbound Interstate 680 between Treat Boulevard and Rudgear Road through Walnut Creek opened on budget and a year ahead of schedule, Bay Area transportation officials said.

The opening of the new stretch results in a 25-mile continuous southbound carpool (or paid FasTrak toll lane) from Martinez to San Ramon.

The Treat-to-Rudgear project work began in October 2018, and was originally planned for a late 2021 opening. But an accelerated project schedule included allowing motorists to use the lane as a high-occupancy vehicle carpool lane while the MTC installs and tests the express lane tolling equipment.

### Contra Costa Mosquitoes Test Positive For West Nile Virus

Mosquitoes trapped earlier near Byron tested positive for West Nile virus, Contra Costa County vector control officials said Friday.

The infected mosquitoes are the first sign of the virus so far this year in the county, where August and September are usually the peak months of West Nile cases in humans, according to the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District.

Residents are urged to prevent the insects from breeding by dumping and draining any standing water on their property and to report neighborhood mosquito issues including neglected swimming pools.

Using repellents during peak mosquito activity, dawn and dusk, is also recommended.

Officials are asking residents to report sightings of dead birds to the statewide West Nile Virus hotline online or by calling (877) WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

"Dead birds, especially crows and jays, are often a good early indication that West Nile virus is present in a particular area. Birds can be carriers of West Nile virus," said Steve Schutz, the district's scientific programs manager.

### City of Walnut Creek, two partners join for rental, utility assistance program

In response to the COVID-19, the City of Walnut Creek is partnering with Shelter, Inc. and St. Vincent de Paul Society for emergency rental and utility assistance for low-income residents.

A total of \$105,000 from the Community Development Block Grant funds and the separate Community Development Block Grant Stimulus Funds is available to support low-income households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

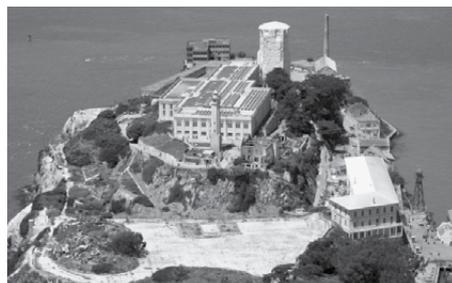
These funds are only available to assist low-income families and individuals who are unable to pay rent or utility bills due to a reduction of work hours, furloughs, unemployment, and/or diagnosis with COVID-19.

Assistance is available either through Shelter, Inc. or St. Vincent de Paul. Residents may receive up to three months of emergency rental and utility assistance based on the need and funding availability.

### Pleasant Hill City Council cancels election

With no challengers to the three incumbent Pleasant Hill City Council members up for re-election in November, the council canceled its local November election. The City Council then appointed those three unopposed incumbents, Mayor Matthew Rinn, Councilmembers Ken Carlson and Tim Flaherty, to fill those three "open" spots, effective in December, when those four-year terms end.

Similarly, City Treasurer Mark Celio was also reappointed to that post, effective in December. Celio also did not draw any opponents for the treasurer's position.



### National Park Service resumes recreational access to Alcatraz

The National Park Service has resumed recreational access to Alcatraz Island. The Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which controls the island, also restored ferry operations to the island, access to interior sections of the island like Building 64 and the warden's house and outdoor areas like Eagle Plaza and the recreation yard.

Visitors to Alcatraz Island are advised to purchase ferry tickets online and review coronavirus safety guidelines at [alcatrazcruises.com](http://alcatrazcruises.com). The park service will also post updates about its operations amid the pandemic at [nps.gov/coronavirus](http://nps.gov/coronavirus). Photo credit: National Park Service/Energy.gov

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# DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE



**VISIT CONCORD**  
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by Elaine Schroth, CEO & President

## Let's Give Them Something to Taco About



The pandemic may be lingering as we head into fall, but there is still something deliciously tempting to look forward to this month: TACOS! Visit Concord is excited to introduce the Taco Trail, a newly compiled directory of restaurants and taquerias that sets Concord apart as the East Bay's go-to destination for great Mexican food.

While Concord has long been home to authentic, family-owned taquerias and restaurants, even regular customers may be surprised to learn there are currently a whopping 39 establishments within city limits just waiting to be explored. To make the Taco Trail cut, their primary business had to be Mexican or Latino food, it had to be located in Concord, and had to be a single location or one of a small number of locations - no national chains (sorry, Taco Bell, El Pollo Loco and Chipotle.)

To kick things off, Visit Concord has launched a month-long campaign featuring a series of social media spotlights and a promotion where taco lovers can earn fun Taco Trail merchandise by visiting the restaurants. Participants will get a point for each location they visit and receive their choice of gift at just 5 points earned (limit one per person). To make it easy, we will launch a mobile-exclusive website called the Visit Concord Passport. The site allows you to check in at participating restaurants instantly through your phone. Just sign up at [adventure.visitconcord.ca.com/tacotrail](https://adventure.visitconcord.ca.com/tacotrail), starting September 1, and you'll be good to go.

There's more. Even after participants have reached their 5 points, there's still an incentive to keep going. The fan with the most points at the end of the month will be named "Trail Champion" and presented with our awesome taco trophy. In addition, there's an award for Best Taco to be determined through Visit Concord's social media pages, so be sure keep track of your conquests and vote for your favorites.

The launch of Concord's Taco Trail coincides with Hispanic Heritage Month, so let's all celebrate and show some love to these great, hard-working members of our community. And when you do discover a glorious new favorite, be sure to take a photo and tell everyone about it

at [#concordtacotrail](https://www.visitconcord.ca.com/tacotrail), [#visitconcord](https://www.visitconcord.ca.com) and [#concordeats](https://www.visitconcord.ca.com). For more information and a complete list of participating restaurants and trail map turn to page 14, or go to <https://www.visitconcord.ca.com/eat-drink/taco-trail/>.

I also want to make sure everyone gets on board with this year's Virtual Concord Jazz Festival, September 16-20. While we will miss our usual live, annual celebration, Visit Concord has teamed up with the City of Concord, the Concord Historical Society and other organizers to create five days of virtual jazz fun that includes live performances, a film festival, a Spotify playlist and more. For information visit <https://www.visitconcord.ca.com/concord-jazz-festival-continues/>



Take a photo with your smart phone to install a complete list of participating restaurants.

## Let's Take a StoryWalk®

San Ramon's new "StoryWalk®" is a wonderfully creative way for children and their families to enjoy both reading and exercise in a beautiful outdoor setting. Located at San Ramon Central Park, the new project features pages taken directly from a children's book and displayed on attractive display stands along a 20-station pathway. As families walk along the path, they read and share the story, step-by-step, page-by-page.

StoryWalk® combine physical activity and the natural beauty of Central Park, with the experience of reading together as a family. The Central Park StoryWalk® begins near the front entrance of the San Ramon Community Center at Central Park, wraps around the pathway near the play structure, ending at the Community Center's rear fountain. The last StoryWalk® panel encourages families to visit the library to find more great picture books and continue their reading adventure.

"StoryWalk® is a fun way to bring families together to promote both early literacy and a love for the outdoors," said Elayne Pedley, San Ramon's Youth Services Librarian. "Each StoryWalk® book choice will be interesting, well-reviewed stories with quality illustrations."

The City of San Ramon's Library Advisory Committee will select stories with a focus on great illustrations and subject matter that include at least some of the following concepts: nature/parks, physical activity, literacy, kindness, diversity, family, or humor. Stories will be changed



City of San Ramon installs the first display.

quarterly. The display stands were funded by the Rotary Club of San Ramon as part of a community partnership between the City of San Ramon Parks and Community Services Department, Contra Costa County Library, the San Ramon Library Foundation and the Rotary Club of San Ramon.

"Particularly during this very difficult COVID-19 environment, families are looking for creative ways to venture outdoors while still promoting learning. This accomplishes both," said Linda Henika, San Ramon Library Foundation President.

The first StoryWalk® book, "Daniel Finds a Poem," by Micha Archer, is a simple story with beautiful collage illustrations. The book won the Ezra Jack Keats "New Illustrator" award and was an American Library Association notable book in 2017.



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- TOM HANKS
- KOONZ
- D BRUBECK
- MARK HAMILL
- BLUE DEVILS
- CANDIOTTI
- SALVIO
- K NEWACHECK
- BLAKE ANDERSON
- C TURLINGTON
- ALICE GRECZYN
- WOTUS

- ACTOR
- MUSICIAN
- HERO
- BAND
- BASEBALL
- FARM
- FILM
- COMIC
- MODEL
- STAR
- COACH

- FAMOUS
- FOLK
- EAST
- FANS



## Word Search Plus

### Famous People from our Neighborhood

We thought we would make our word search a wee more challenging. We've hidden a code that will reveal one final famous neighbor. Here is your clue: This celebrity graduated from Las Lomas High School and attended Diablo Valley College briefly before moving to San Francisco to pursue acting. She played a part in the cult classic movie "Donnie Darko," but is best known for her roles in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "the Graduate". Who is this actress?

**Hint:** Find all the letters that are not utilized in the word search to reveal an anagram. Decipher that and you have your answer. Answer on page 16.

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# David George THE NAKED GARDENER

## Is Your Garden Fire Safe?

My wife and I were recently awakened at 5 AM by fierce winds, flashes of lightning, and loud thunder – one blast right over our heads that made us jump and our dogs scurrying for cover. We were safe, but our Northern California wildlands were not protected from hundreds of “dry” lightning strikes and fire starts. The 2020 fire season had started with a bang.

Lightning-started fires are an all-natural phenomenon. Whether started by nature or man, we live in a fire-prone state. Many of us live in or near woodlands and grassy ridges. This is risky wildfire territory. But fire embers can carry on winds for miles, right into what we think are safe neighborhoods. No matter where we live, fire can ruin our beautiful homes, communities, and sometimes lives. Seasonal acrid smoke in the air reminds us of our more unfortunate California neighbors and communities who experience this nightmare firsthand.

What can and should we do about this? The California state agency, Cal Fire has some great fire-smart recommendations for homeowners. Here is a good link to review their advice: <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/Homeowners-Checklist.pdf>. With

also trim green branches from tree trunks high enough that you cannot reach them anymore without a ladder.

Shrubs should be trimmed down to 1/3



Keep bushes low and trees trimmed high

the height of the lowest tree limbs and leaves. Dead grasses and weeds should be removed. Three-foot tall shrubs and grasses burn with flames that are 6-9 feet tall. Fire officials call this a “fire ladder” that allows low, easily-controlled grass fires to climb into the crowns of trees creating fiery embers that land on rooftops and flames that burn into eaves.

### Clearing

If your home borders natural grassy or shrubby spaces, weed whack weeds, grasses and shrubs to the ground they turn brown in May. Fire agencies recommend 30 feet of clearance from neighborhood homes and 100-200 feet of clearance for more rural properties. Since I live in an oak woodland, I whack grasses and weeds 200-400 feet out from my home for extra protection. Clear any large dead limbs or other flammable fuel well away from your home.



Succulents are 90+% water and fire safe.

In landscaped areas, keep the plan simple, with good separation between larger plants, more fire-prone plants well away from structures, and normally unused extra irrigation channels that can be turned on in a fire emergency to thoroughly soak the ground around your home. It's not expensive to build this extra protection into your irrigation



Place Fire-safe hardscape, succulents and low trees near home

fire-smart plantings and trimming, we can use our property and garden to better protect our homes. Let's explore planting, pruning, and clearing with fire safety in mind.

### Planting

Within 5 feet of your house, don't mulch with a wood-based material such as cedar bark or wood chips. Instead, use a non-flammable mulch such as decorative stone chips or pebbles. The plantings around your home should be green, well-watered and hopefully a type of plant that retains a lot of water its leaves and stems, like succulents. Bushes should be compact and mid-size or smaller. Select trees that, when mature remain no taller than your rooftop. Many California native plants have marvelous regeneration capabilities after being scorched by fire, but they develop flammable resins to protect from water loss. They are not a good choice close to your home.



Non-flammable mulches

Well-irrigated plants around your home, including green lawns are good protection against the fast spread of ground fires. Practicing water-wise garden habits is generally good, but I like to give my garden extra water around my home during fire season.

### Pruning

The fire agencies recommend (and sometimes require) that mature trees be trimmed up 3x higher than bushes below. Dead branches are highly flammable and should be trimmed off, but you should

system.

For more information about fire-resistant landscaping, check out: <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/fire-resistant-landscaping/>. Enjoy your garden and landscaping, but be smart about planning for fire storms. The home or neighborhood you save may be your own! Email your comments and questions to: [NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com). In some cases these may appear in future columns.

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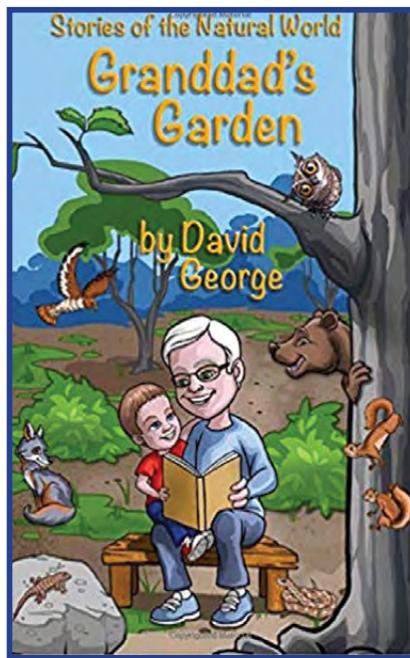
Registration just \$10 and registrants receive a \$10 Nursery coupon after attending!

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**ONLINE AUCTION**  
Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>

Details at:

[Ruthbancroftgarden.org/Gala2020](http://Ruthbancroftgarden.org/Gala2020)



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Gabriela Aldava  
Diversion Specialist, 3 years



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*"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 Clane,  
Tech Writer, Computers USA

## Enough with the Ads Already

Like a “bad penny” that always seems to turn up, most Internet surfers, like you, are plagued with an endless stream of unwanted and unnecessary pop-up ads. Even if you have pop-up blocking software, somehow these ads seem to make their way to your screen. It can be annoying, but how can you stop it and what good would it do anyway? Ads are everywhere and most of them make bogus claims that you will be better off if you buy or use their products. Some ads are funny and recallable while others seem to only try to intimidate you into using their product or service. A few, and just a few, are legitimate and really could help you, but how would you know the good from the bad through all the noise? Here’s my philosophy on the subject. If you need help, seek it. Don’t wait for an ad to tell you what your problem is and how to solve it. In my efforts to seek help, I turn to Internet browsing as many do. The Internet browsers are a good way to find useful information and one can use Microsoft’s Edge (previously known as Internet Explorer), Apple’s Safari, Google’s Chrome or a host of others for this



purpose. To locate information about “ad blockers”, open your favorite browser and type in that name, a list will be displayed of the top 10 ad blockers. Be careful here. Hype runs rampant on the Internet because those “top 10” ad blockers displayed are usually sponsored by the various companies that appear on the list in the first place, but the list is a good place to start. One of the first things to be concerned about is a tie-in with anti-virus software along with the ad blocker software. You don’t want that. You want a stand-alone ad blocker that is a “browser extension” meaning the software attaches itself to your browser. By attaching itself to the browser, known as an applet or extension, you can turn it on or off at will. So, if you want ads from a certain web site, you have the option to get them. Besides, the anti-virus software you already have is likely the one you want and replacing it could cause more harm than good. My advice is to consult someone who has already experimented with ad blocker

software before you venture out, “seek and you will find”. However, if you know how to install and uninstall browser extensions go ahead and experiment. The worst that can happen is you need to uninstall the browser and reinstall it. You will likely not disrupt your computer in any other way. Here’s my recommended list, as a MSP (managed service provider), we use one of these. For regular users, check out Ad-Block Content Filtering, uBlock Origin, and Ad Block Plus Chrome. For geeks, check out Zotero, Dashlane, and LastPass. Now go block those annoying ads or call your local IT support people for help.



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

## COVID and I have a proposition for you

Wow, hasn’t Covid changed the way we live in our homes? Our rooms and tables have been transformed to classrooms, desks and offices, and oh, we need an exercise room, because we can’t go to the gym. Though we are grateful to have a home to cocoon inside of, it brings front and center what the positive attributes (or lack thereof) we have or need.

For many, the adaptations cause one to re-evaluate their current home and next move. Should you add a room or an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), a he/she shed, an office, or just decide to sell and move to something already done that meets our needs better?

HGTV and quarantine have caused a home improvement explosion. According to a Porch.com survey, as of July 2020, 76% of homeowners in the US have carried out at least one home improvement project since the start of the COVID pandemic, and 78% plan to undertake at least one home improvement project in the next 12 months.

The COVID “real estate recession” is not visible here. Homes coming on the market for sale are selling in record time. Prices have surpassed the pre-Covid prices in most neighborhoods because of lack of inventory. This may be a very good time to sell if you are thinking of selling a home this year.

However, on the other side of the coin, when I called for a photographer, they were fully booked for the week, meaning there are more homes getting ready to come on the market.

Will buyers have a chance to obtain that home they are wanting? It will be interesting to see how long the shortage lasts and/or if folks that have been waiting are

all going to come on the market this Fall. Real estate is nothing if not interesting and unpredictable.

No open houses allowed?! No problem. Instead, we make appointments for showing to have access when others are not in the home. For most sellers and buyers, this is better because buyers now have time to view the property without distraction. That four or five buyers out of the 100 that previously came to an open house are still making offers. You just don’t have the other 95 looky-lous. Realtors are equipped with masks, gloves, and Lysol at the ready for listing or showing a home.

As communities loosen their ADU regulations, there is pending legislation for families who want to keep a home in the family. California Propositions 58 and 193 provide property tax relief for real property transfers between parents and children and from grandparents to grandchildren. Each Proposition makes it easier to keep property “in the family.” A claim must be filed within three years of the date of transfer to receive the full benefits of the exclusion. There are also certain eligibility requirements to meet. Be sure to vote yes on these important propositions. You never know when it might help someone in the family to own or stay in their home.

*Terrylynn Fisher, Broker, CRS Certified Residential Specialist, Marketing and Negotiation Expert, Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES), Dudum Real Estate DRE#01882902, For a winning Selling Plan, or Buyer Strategy, call 925 876-0966, info@BuyStageSell.com. DRE#00615420*

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## Fran Cain's bookends

### FROM SHADOW'S PERSPECTIVE

"From Shadow's Perspective" by Jill Hedgecock (2020, Goshawk Press, paperback, 378 pages, \$13.49) is the second book in the young adult series about Sarah Whitman, now seventeen, trying to pick her way through the already complex teen years made so much worse after the death of her father. Sarah's only comforts in life are her ghost-seeing, red Doberman, Shadow, and the "Twelve Rules for Successful Relationships" her father wrote for her before he died. Sarah soon finds that living up to those rules is not going to be easy. She is bullied by her guardian's jealous granddaughter, pursued by two of the cutest guys in high school, working to get emancipated from her legal guardian, and threatened by her old nemesis, Dr. Claudia Griffin, a dog behaviorist introduced in "Between Shadow's Eyes". When Sarah sees the apparition of a small child in the corner of her classroom through Shadow's eyes, her life is about to change even more. Always a problem solver, she wants answers. Who is this child and how did he die? In order to find out, Sarah must learn that the people in her life are not who they seem to be.

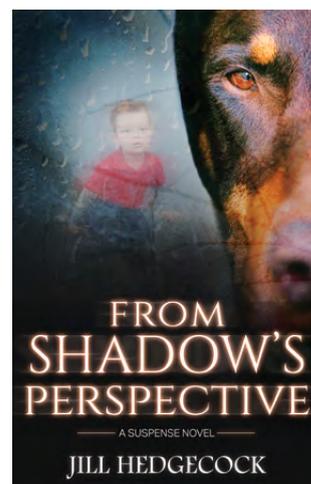
Hedgecock's story is a page turner providing just the right balance of typical teenage angst we can all relate to, extraordinary challenges that result from Sarah being orphaned, and ghostly who-done-it murder mystery. Sarah works hard to live up to her father's expectations and tries to use the guidance he provided to make

good decisions. She bravely faces seemingly constant struggles with outside forces. As often as not, things can and do go wrong.

She is a teenager after all, and sometimes has to learn life's lessons the hard way, even when Dad appears from beyond the grave and attempts to protect her. Sarah pushes through, faces her fears, and provides a wholesome, determined role model for young-adult readers.

Hedgecock loves animals, and it comes through in her Shadow stories which highlight the loving bond between Sarah and her dog. We also get an insider's look of what it's like to participate in dog training exercises, yet another challenge ambitious Sarah takes on, because Hedgecock is an expert agility handler who trains and competes with her real-life dogs, Bailey, Annie and Charlie. Through sweet, affectionate Shadow, Hedgecock champions the unjustly maligned Doberman breed.

This book is available at <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/Bo8GYNHM4Z>



*This is the third release from our own Jill Hedgecock (Chasing Jill Hedgecock, September 2016 p. 14) a regular contributor to The Diablo Gazette. She is passionate about dogs, wildlife, and rhino preservation. Check out the first Shadow book, "Between Shadow's Eyes" (2019, Goshawk Press) and debut novel, "Rhino in the Room" (2018, Goshawk Press). Learn more of her books at [jillhedgecock.com](http://jillhedgecock.com).*



# FALL HOME TOUR



Welcome to our Fall Home Tour Frugelegance Style. It sure doesn't feel like it, but Fall is quickly approaching. We've all been home quite a bit more which has kind of given us more need to change things up a bit, especially since Fall is one of our most favorite seasons to decorate. Follow along with us for little tour to see how small touches throughout a home can make everything more comfy cozy.

Let's start at the beginning, the front door. The front door is the place your guests get the first impression of your home. Welcome them with some warm and inviting seasonal favorites like a beautiful wreath, baskets, plants, lanterns and pumpkins. Keep it simple. Even though there are many Fall plants you can choose, you can never go wrong with a colorful assortment of Mums. Add in some Kale and Flowering Cabbage plants for a total wow factor.

The kitchen is the heart of a home. We love to have a beautiful centerpiece on the island and one on the table. Keep fresh herbs like oregano and rosemary in a decorative urn. It will look beautiful and smell amazing. Remember mini pumpkins? Place them on the windowsill, across the table, next to the fruit bowl and/or next to the soap dispenser. Other nice decorative touches we like to do is drape a Fall garland from the light fixture (Do Not hang any near the light bulbs).

Be sure to include those sensational

Fall aromas. Bake some Fall favorite recipes like our Pumpkin Dump Cake. The house will smell fabulous. We also like to put cinnamon sticks around the house and light Fall candles. Trader Joe's has an amazing selection of cinnamon wisps and dried accents at great prices.

Keep in mind, all the miscellaneous touches throughout the rest of the house

all add up. Many items we use we have owned for years. We either store them in a Rubbermaid bin in the garage or reuse them each season but change a few things around it each time. Some super simple changes can also

include switching out some decorative pillow covers and throw blankets (Fall is a great time for a faux fur blanket). Marshall's and Homegoods always have a great selection.

We hope our Fall home tour inspires you to bring some Seasonal Frugelegance into your home. You can find links to some of our Fall decor, and some shopping comparisons on our original blog post at [frugelegance.com](http://frugelegance.com).

*Carol and Randi, the FruGirls, are local home stagers and decorators. You can also find them blogging about many other ways to live an elegant life for less Online. Frugelegance is where Frugal and Elegance come together.*



# Out to Lunch

## Wence's Restaurant

by Richard Eber

When I first met Gerardo Wence and his wife Sandra some eight years ago, they had just opened the restaurant bearing their name on 1922 Oak Park Blvd. in Pleasant Hill. There was little room for error as the family mortgaged their home to finance the new venture.

Since then, things have come together for the eatery whose signature dish has been house-made adult macaroni and cheese, infused with truffle oil, prepared in individual cast iron skillet. From their humble beginnings, Wence's Restaurant has expanded adding a full service bar and additional seating to accommodate their growing clientele.

For now, during the Covid-10 crisis, they are relying on 38 tables of outside seating to take care of the demands of loyal customers. When the pandemic is over, there are plans to add a raw bar and a banquet facility for catering to larger groups.

Trying to define the exact style of cooking of Chef Wence is a difficult task because he incorporates both Western and Eastern influences with a California Cuisine flair. With help from his son Jesus and daughter, Wence puts in at least 70 hours per week.

"I don't mind as the restaurant business is a labor of love for me," he says after toiling like this for over 30 years.

Sea Food is delivered

six days a week from respected purveyor Vince's Shellfish Company. They supply a wide variety of fresh fish, clams, mussels, and oysters to fill Wence's ambitious menu. Straus Family Creamery provides high quality organic products. Wence ventures to Oakland several times a week to select premium produce and vegetables to accompany his seafood specialties.



For starters, it is difficult to beat their Monterey fried Calamari which is served with House-made Creole Ramoulade sauce. Also noteworthy are the Citrus Habanero Scallop's and the Sautéed Black Muscles in a lemon-wine sauce that begs for sourdough bread to lap up all of the flavors. In addition Wence's features oysters on the half shell including Kumamoto's from Humboldt Bay, Washington's Hood Canals, and Canadian ones which vary by season.

Popular on the main menu are the fish and chips utilizing Alaskan cod. The beer battered pieces are firm yet the fish is moist and tender. It is served with shoestring potatoes, Cole slaw, and house made tartar sauce. The wild king salmon is also excellent as are the lobster tacos. My favorite is the seared Chilean Sea Bass served in a saffron-crab broth with jumbo prawns, manila clams, and Mediterranean muscles. As a bonus ingredient, Wence adds Chorizo sausage for his personal touch to this culinary masterpiece.

On the pasta side, Wence's offers a wild shrimp scampi, Cajun Jambalaya, Lobster-spinach fettuccine and a traditional Caracara made with Gorganelli pasta with



English peas, mushrooms, and pancetta, in a cream sauce.

For non seafood diners, they will not be disappointed by Wence's meat and poultry selections. They feature lamb chops, a 12 oz. rib eye steak, chicken scaloppini and Picata. Like the seafood items, all of these dishes come with fresh vegetables and mashed potatoes. I especially liked the garlic ones, as they are a welcome contrast to both seafood and meat pairings.

For those who are not as hungry or have filled up on appetizers, Wence's has an outstanding sandwich menu to meet varying tastes. At one of my visits, I could not help but order their French dip utilizing rare prime rib meat served with creamy dill horseradish sauce. They also have a fresh Albacore

Tuna Melt, and an Avocado Blt, along with a couple of chicken sandwich selections.

As for dessert options, Wence satisfies with several house-made selections. I especially enjoyed the peach crème brulee and the Pistachio Biscotti berry crisp. There are also a wide array of tasty treats including a chocolate torte, Cajun Beignets, and various Gelato flavors. For larger groups, I would recommend sharing desserts as the helpings are plentiful.

With a full bar and diverse wine menu Wence's has a happy hour Monday-Friday from 3 to 5 pm with discounted drinks and appetizers. During this time slot they also offer Prefix specials from the main menu in the \$16.00 to \$ 21.00 range. They feature soup or salad, entrée, and dessert. These dishes are a great value especially for those experiencing Wence's offerings for the first time.

On weekends an extensive brunch menu is served between 10 am till 2 pm. Their Eggs Benedict's featuring a homemade hollandaise sauce is quite popular, especially if Dungeness crab or lobster meat are added.

Wence's is open for lunch every day from 11am-2and dinners between 3 and 9pm. During Covid-19, with outside seating limited, reservations are recommended on line or at 925-566-8972.



Jesus and Gerardo Wence



## Rediscover Home Canning

By Deb Morris



Are you finding it hard to keep busy while isolating at home during the age of COVID-19? With the ongoing pandemic, many people are learning how to bake, how to grow their own vegetables,

how to repair their homes, and how to cook. Why not add home canning to your to-learn list?

Now is the perfect time to rediscover the fun and flavor of home canning because September offers the best of summer's peaches, corn, peppers, and cucumbers while also giving you a glimpse of fall with apples, pears, Brussels sprouts, and more. Imagine your pantry full of canned peaches or jam, strawberry jam, applesauce or apple butter, or your very own homemade dill pickles!

Pick up a book or two on home canning like the "Ball Blue Book," a longtime favorite. We also recommend that you stick with reputable canning websites such [freshpreserving.com](http://freshpreserving.com) or the National Center for Home Food Preservation at [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu). Another website for safe canning recipes is [foodinjars.com](http://foodinjars.com), where you'll find safe and tested recipes. Consider joining a Facebook group that offers recipes and information for canners. Whichever way you decide to learn, be sure to learn how to preserve and can safely while self-isolating at home.

- Dill Pickles**  
 16 to 18 good sized pickling cucumbers, washed  
 2 cups apple cider vinegar  
 2 cups distilled white vinegar  
 4 cups water  
 5 tablespoons pickling salt  
 16 garlic cloves, 2 per jar  
 16 small sprigs fresh dill, 2 per jar  
 4 teaspoons mixed pickling spices  
 4 dried chili peppers, seeded (optional), 1/2 for each jar  
 8 pint canning jars, lids, and rings



In a large pot, combine water, vinegars, and salt. Bring to a simmer. Sterilize 8 pint jars in boiling water for a few minutes. Arrange on the counter and evenly divide spices, garlic, and optional chili peppers in each jar. Slice off blossom ends of each pickle. Slice pickles into halves or quarters. Keep on ice until ready to stuff jars.

Firmly pack pickles into each jar, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Carefully pour hot vinegar mixture into each jar up to 1/2 inch below rim of jar. Use a butter knife and slide it down the inside of each jar to remove any air bubbles. Add sterilized lids and rings and process in boiling water for 10 minutes in water bath canner. Remove from canner and let cool on the counter. Listen for the lids to pop. Store in a cool, dark cupboard for up to 9 months.

Your bulk purchases will greatly help your local farmers during this difficult time. With months of pandemic restrictions - and now threatened with wildfires and smoke - farmers are being hit hard on all sides.

*Deb Morris is a marketing and promotions specialist for Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association. For a calendar of local farmers market events go to [www.pcfma.org](http://www.pcfma.org)*



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# aRt Cottage

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

## “5 From 6”

I enjoy developing themes for each show at the aRt Cottage. Our last several shows have featured female artists, so I thought I would try something new and call upon six male artists to exhibit five pieces each, hence the show title, “Five from Six.”

Many shows are about a group of artists who are really close, or have worked together, or known each other for a long time, not this one. I have a connection with each one of these artists.

George Rammell, Walter Crew, and Martin Biro are long time members of the East Bay Artist Guild (EBAG). That is where I first met them.

Robert Bradley, who was also a member of the group at one time, became a volunteer at the Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek as a docent, as is Walter Crew.

Eric Vandetta is a teacher at Wren elementary School of Arts in Concord and

By George Rammell

has frequented the aRt Cottage. On one visit, he purchased one of Walter’s pieces.

I met Tom several years ago when he drove by the aRt Cottage and asked me, “What is this place all about?” He introduced himself to me and soon became



Raven Scape by Walter Crew

an exhibiting artist like the others. He is the highest selling artist here.

I hope you all will enjoy this striking collection of bold and bright works from some very talented men. This show runs through Oct.23.

There will be an artist reception on Sunday, Oct. 4 from 2 to 4. All are welcome. Open 11 - 5 Tues. - Fri. and 1 - 5 on Sat.



By Robert Bradley



Pretend by Vandetta



“Sunset” by Martin Biro



“Borders” by Quinlavin

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that were formed many years ago that have shaped how we feel about people and life in general, are kept there. 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.

RTT Practitioners apply different techniques to eradicate and eliminate many of the common yet damaging repressive beliefs such as "I am not smart enough," "pretty enough," "lovable," "successful enough," "interesting enough," "wealthy enough," and plant new positive transforming ones.

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## COVID: New statewide reopening process

Claycord.com - On August 28, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a revamped statewide process for counties to re-open businesses and schools during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Counties will be placed in one of four tiers – Widespread, Substantial, Moderate and Minimal – based on their rate of the virus' spread.

Each tier corresponds with thresholds for a county's rate of new cases per 100,000 residents and the rate of positive tests. The Widespread category, in which counties are placed when they have more than seven new cases per 100,000 and a positivity rate of more than 8 percent, signifies counties with the worst virality rates in the state.

"We hope (the new framework) is not only more dynamic but it's much more simple (sic) to understand," Newsom said.

The tier system will be updated weekly on Tuesdays, according to Newsom. Among the state's 58 counties, 38 will begin on the Widespread tier, nine counties on the Substantial tier, eight counties on the Moderate tier and three counties on the Minimal tier.

San Francisco and Napa counties are the only two in the greater Bay Area that are not in the Widespread tier, sitting in the Substantial tier instead.

The tier system went into effect August 31, the same time that hair salons and barbershops will receive a green light from the state to begin operating indoors with modifications statewide, regardless of which tier their county sits within.

Schools will not be allowed to resume in-person instruction until their county has moved out of the Widespread tier.

Counties can only progress one tier at a time toward a larger reopening, and counties that progress from one tier to another must remain in their new state for at least 21 days.

A county must also meet the next tier's case and positivity rate thresholds for at least 14 consecutive days before they can progress to a more lenient tier.

Newsom said state health officials had recognized that the previous attempt to reopen in late May and June had been too lenient at the county level.

The state's first attempt at reopening led to increased spread of the virus in June and July. The state's coronavirus hospitalizations spiked during that time, from 3,142 on June 4 to 7,170 on July 21.

"We're going to be more stubborn this time," Newsom said. "We know that when you find a case today that it has a chance to end up in the hospital three, four weeks down the road," he said.

Newsom also announced that the state has redesigned its coronavirus hub website, [covid19.ca.gov](http://covid19.ca.gov), and added a "What's Open" tool that residents can use to see which tier their county is at and the operating status for businesses like restaurants, zoos and retail stores.

## East Bay's go-to destination for Authentic Mexican food has a name - the Concord Taco Trail



- 1 Guacamole Authentic Mexican Grill 790 Oak Grove Rd., Ste D
- 2 Salsa Verde Mexican Cuisine 970 Detroit Ave.
- 3 El Yahualica Tacos 2699 Monument Blvd., Ste 1
- 4 Las Montañas Supermarket 2691 Monument Blvd.
- 5 El Faro México Foods 2280 Monument Blvd.
- 6 La Morenita Market 1120 Meadow Lane
- 7 Herencia Hidalguense La Casa De La Barbacoa 1140 Meadow Lane, Ste B
- 8 Las Chismosas Taqueria 1955 Monument Blvd., #4E
- 9 Taqueria Los Cahanillas 1880 Monument Blvd.
- 10 Mercado Del Valle 1651 Monument Blvd.

- 11 La Cabana Bar & Grill 1500 Monument Blvd., B
- 12 Taqueria Mariscos 1500 Monument Blvd., A1
- 13 Pancho Villa 1500 Monument Blvd., F13
- 14 Tortilleria El Molino 1500 Monument Blvd., F1
- 15 Rancheros Taqueria 1099 Reganti Dr., Ste B
- 16 Mercado Del Sol 1450 Monument Blvd.
- 17 Puesto 2035 Diamond Blvd.
- 18 Carnes Jalisco 2186 Solano Way
- 19 Los Pinos 3375 Port Chicago Hwy, #21
- 20 La Piñata of Concord 2301 Willow Pass Rd.
- 21 Taqueria Los Gallos 1950 Grant St.

- 22 Canasta Kitchen 2118 Mt Diablo St.
- 23 Agave Cantina & Grill 1935 Galindo St.
- 24 Mariscos La Playita 1841 Willow Pass Rd.
- 25 Taqueria La Soledad 1758 Salvio St.
- 26 Taqueria Los Gallos Express 1747 Willow Pass Rd.
- 27 Las Montañas Supermarket 1725 Willow Pass Rd.
- 28 Salsa México Grill 1680 Willow Pass Rd., #C
- 29 La Tapatia México Restaurant and Cantina 1802 Willow Pass Rd.
- 30 Taqueria La Plaza 1801 Sutter St.
- 31 Los Tacos De Pancho 2699 Clayton Rd.

- 32 Taqueria Autlan 3535 Clayton Rd.
- 33 Cinco de Mayo 4115 Concord Blvd., Ste 22
- 34 Los Portales Taqueria 4305 Clayton Rd.
- 35 Taqueria Los Arcos 4530 Clayton Rd., Ste A
- 36 El Mariachi Grill 4673 Clayton Rd., #G
- 37 Taqueria Los Palmas 4787 Clayton Rd.
- 38 Lisa V's 5100 Clayton Rd.
- 39 Guadalajara Grill 5446 Ygnacio Valley Rd.

¡Muchas gracias a todos los restaurantes y taquerias de Concord por la comida deliciosa, su dedicación y participación!



# EMOTIONAL HEALTH

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

## Overcoming Grief

Most of us have encountered life events that create grief. Perhaps it was the death of a loved one, loss of a job, end of a relationship, deteriorating health, or another life challenge. A WebMD survey conducted in 2019 found that 72% of respondents said they had experienced grief over a life event in the past three years.

Has the Coronavirus pandemic triggered additional sources of grief for you? Maybe it's the loss of social connection and community, ongoing threats to your health, unexpected financial hardships, loss of ability to travel, or a sense of displacement and being overwhelmed. Or, if a loved one has died because of Covid-19, your grief may have been amplified by an inability to say goodbye in person. While many of us have escaped such misfortunes, we may share in the grief experienced by loved ones or the broader community.

In her 1969 book "On Death and Dying," Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced the five stages of grief people experience on the path to recovery: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These stages are not necessarily linear. You can experience more than one at a time, or go back and forth between them, particularly if an event triggers you to return to an earlier stage.

How long does recovery from grief typically take? In the WebMD survey highlighted above, nearly half of respondents said their most powerful feelings subsided within six months, and two-thirds indicated they had recovered within a year. But some people get stuck in grief, leaving scars that can linger for years or a lifetime.

The good news is that you can take actions to promote recovery. Seeking professional help from a qualified practitioner, particularly for severe grief, can be an important first step. Many practitioners are available online or in person using a variety of techniques to shepherd you through the stages of grief. Teaching professionals often have interns who charge minimal amounts.

You can also take action on your own. We recommend Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or tapping. EFT involves tapping on body pressure points to get release from negative emotions. It's a fast, easy, and proven method, and there are many sites on the internet and YouTube that demonstrate its use. Check out Gary Craig's, the founder of EFT, website

emofree.com (click Gold Standard EFT Tapping Tutorial on the website's bottom right).

Holly and Bill have worked extensively with EFT for grief created by loss and trauma. We have examples to share of its effectiveness, but to maintain anonymity, we have changed the details. Holly worked with a woman who lost her child. For over ten years she sat on her sofa isolated, depressed, and nonfunctional, doing little but watching TV. After one session of EFT, her grief cycle was broken, and the next week she started a job search, embarking on a new and rewarding phase of life.

In another case, Holly worked with a man who had felt a sense of guilt his entire life. He was always apologizing but didn't know why. EFT helped him remember a key aspect of a tragic incident in his childhood. He recalled that when his brother was hit and killed by a car, he hid in his closet taking on the trauma and guilt of his brother's death. With time he forgot about his reaction, but his buried grief and guilt unconsciously affected his life.

Sometimes it takes several sessions of EFT to gain results, since it could involve peeling off layers, such as multiple incidents that caused or re-triggered grief. Bill worked with a man who had lost his wife a few years ago. The man grieved for about a year, but successfully worked through the stages of grief to reach acceptance. When the Coronavirus pandemic struck, he found that without a partner, the sudden isolation of sheltering-in-place re-triggered the grief over his wife's death. Daily sessions of EFT for a week helped him break his grief cycle again.

Grief when left untreated can stay with a person a lifetime. We both had parents who never fully healed from the traumas of World War II. Holly's father was the only soldier to survive in battle when a grenade hit his unit. Bill's mother was just one of two girls in a large group who survived the bombing of the railroad station in Dresden, Germany. Both parents suffered from lifelong survivor's guilt.

We are gratified to expose you to the powerful tool of EFT and the professional help available online or in person to aid with grief. 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).

## How gargling helps with stress

By Lisa Vonnegut, CSCS



It's been a tough year. Remember the murder hornets? What could have been huge news

was barely a blip on our radar than the catastrophic upheaval of 2020. Our stress levels and resilience are being tested, and we've lost the ability to sweat it out at the gym, blow off steam with friends at Happy Hour, or escape to a show. So, where does that leave us?

Fortunately, our bodies come wired with a built-in stress reliever, the vagus nerve. Cranial Nerve #10 is the longest nerve in the body, hence its name "vagus," Latin for "wandering." It's best known for its ability to upregulate your parasympathetic nervous system, which governs the "Rest and Digest" response and counters the sympathetic "Fight or Flight" response - our go-to response when it comes to all things 2020.

Since it innervates the heart, lungs, and gut, it can powerfully alter your physical reaction to stress and improve your mental and emotional state. The activity of the vagus nerve is described by Vagal tone, the higher the tone, the better the parasympathetic response and the calmer we feel. The process is reciprocal as well: the better we feel, the higher our vagal tone is.

You don't have to be a neuroscientist to understand how to activate your vagus nerve. Here are some easy techniques anyone can do.

### Breathing

It innervates the lungs, so breathwork activates the vagus nerve. Here are three easy breathing exercises you can try.

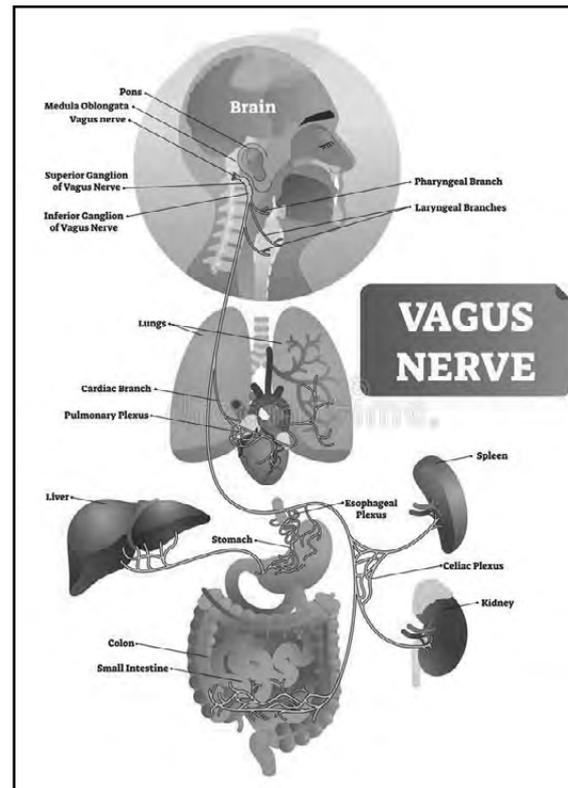
1. Take deep slow breaths - Focus on inhaling and exhaling LESS than six times in a minute.
2. Long exhalations and short inhalations - Inhale for a three count and exhale for a count of nine.
3. Square breathing - Inhale for a count of four, hold for a count of four. Exhale for a count of four, hold for a count of four, and repeat the cycle for 5-10 minutes.

### Singing, Humming, Gargling

The vagus nerve innervates parts of the throat so any of these can increase your vagal tone. Humming and singing also require breathing, so you get double activation. Gargling for 10-20 seconds can be a strong stimulus for the vagus nerve.

### Gentle pressure on the gut

Remember those neoprene back braces? They're useless for back injuries but excellent for activating your vagus nerve.



You can also try a gentle warm pack on your belly for 20 minutes at a time.

### Meditation and Mindfulness

Neuroscience explains what gurus have known for thousands of years. If you're a beginner, apps such as Calm and Headspace are excellent to get you started.

### Gentle vibration in the left ear

The parasympathetic branch of the vagus nerve is superficial to the skin just above the outer part of the ear canal. Using a small vibration tool such as the tip of a vibrating toothbrush for 3-5 minutes can provide vagus nerve activation. Be sure the sensation is gentle and comfortable. Too much pressure or painful stimulation is counter to the goal.

### Exercise

Is this even really news? Exercise activates the vagus nerve in numerous ways. Plus, you also get the benefit of increasing your physical health.

Start by trying one or two of these techniques 3-5 times a day. Most only take a few minutes, and the investment of time will pay off in greater concentration, better resilience, and an improved sense of well-being. Build the habit slowly and stick with it. After all, there are still four months left in 2020.

[Lisa Vonnegut is a trainer and coach specializing in neural performance and wellness. Follow Lisa @bodysynergyfitness and PM your health and fitness related questions to her.]

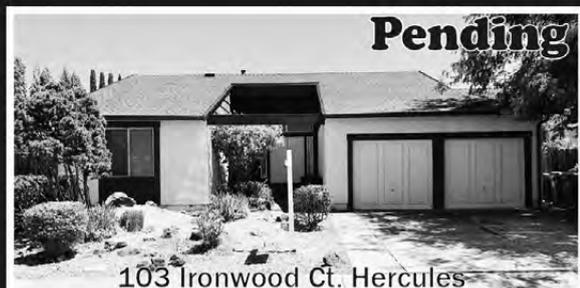


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## Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

# Aria is one scrappy survivor

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

Aria is a 6- to 8-year-old mini-aussie/chihuahua (best guess) mix. This adorable girl is gray with black spots and has medium length fur. The little darling has not had a good life. She came into rescue last April with the grim reaper staring down at her. She was the definition of a hot mess. Aria was so dehydrated and so sickly that she couldn't drink or eat. Under the loving care of her foster mom who feed her water and bone broth through a syringe, she gradually increased from a 5.5 lb. skeleton to 12.8 lbs.

Once she was healthy enough, it was time to address her untrimmed nails that curled into her paws making it impossible for her to walk. Then it was discovered she had been shot at some point in her relatively short life and the bullet shattered the joints to the point that her right front leg had to be amputated. Not surprisingly, she is an extremely shy girl and slow to trust new people.

Aria is:

- A speed-demon on three legs
- Housebroken
- Very loving after she gets to know you
- Not good on leash yet, but settles in to being carried in a sling
- Good with other dogs, but isn't really interested in playing with them
- Looking for a quiet home without children

Aria is slow to trust and the adoption process may require multiple visits. Her ideal home is a quiet setting with a yard. An experienced dog owner who understands timid dogs is a plus. Like the rest of her, her teeth needed medical attention and she had 13 teeth removed. She can eat small breed kibble just fine. Aria is fixed, fully vaccinated, dewormed, and microchipped. Her adoption fee is \$250.

If you're ready to give this scrappy survivor the kind forever that she surely deserves, contact Underdog at [adopt@underdogca.com](mailto:adopt@underdogca.com) for questions or fill out an application: <https://www.underdogca.com/adoptable>. Three-legged dogs can live long, happy and healthy lives with a few minor adjustments to their home and care. Providing raised water and food bowls, placing throw rugs on slick flooring such as wood, tile, or linoleum, and purchasing a soft elevated dog bed so that she can easily get up are some helpful ways to make Aria's life easier.

Aria is being fostered through Underdog Rescue, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Underdog's mission is to save shelter dogs that are out of time or that require rehabilitation prior to adoption. Underdog is a non-profit group that operates on donations

and maintains a wish list with Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2R1518QUC44OV/ref=cm\\_sw\\_su\\_w](https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2R1518QUC44OV/ref=cm_sw_su_w).



**Pawsitive News.** Are you a fan of American Ninja Warrior? Well, now there is a canine version on A&E TV called America's Top Dog. The 11 episodes of Season 1 can be viewed on: <https://www.aetv.com/shows/americas-top-dog>. The dogs compete with their handlers by navigating through obstacle courses that have the dogs opening opening doors,

sniffing out contraband, and tackling bad guys. So cuddle up with Fido and binge watch this highly-entertaining show.

Sept. 14-21 is Adopt-a-Less-Adoptable-Pet Week. In addition to Aria and Hondo (August edition), check out Graham (May edition) and the Shyles (featured in the October 2018 Gazette and still looking for a home!) and other senior pets at <http://www.tailsofgray.org/available.html>.

**Bone to Pick.** Approximately 1,803 packages of Carnivora dog and cat food sold between January 13, 2020 and June 2020 that were tainted with E. coli have been recalled. Go to [www.dogfoodadvisor.com](http://www.dogfoodadvisor.com) for more information.

Many well-meaning owners shave their dog thinking it will help them deal with the heat. However, this is a bad idea for double-coated breeds like Golden retrievers, most Nordic breeds (Samoyeds, Huskies) and herding breeds like Aussies and shelties. These breeds shed their undercoat, but not their outer coat or guard hairs which protects their skin from sunburn and provides insulation him the heat. A good brushing is a kinder solution than shaving for hot weather for these breeds. Here are some tips for brushing your dog from Dogtime.com:

- Always brush in the direction the coat grows. Dogs don't like being brushed backwards.
- Be gentle and untangle any painful snags.
- Apply a coat conditioner or mat spray for mats and let it set for several minutes before using large-toothed comb. Or carefully cut out mats with scissors. Dog groomers may be a better option in some cases.

*Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram canine celebrity with over 140,000 followers on [Instagram.com/rubydooby\\_Do](https://www.instagram.com/rubydooby_Do). This column is written by Jill Hedgecock. Her just released book "From Shadow's Perspective," the sequel to her novel, "Between Shadow's Eyes," features Ruby on the cover. [www.jillhedgecock.com](http://www.jillhedgecock.com).*

## ARF Adoption Stars Kirk & Manny

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're interested in on our website, just fill out an online inquiry form. Once your inquiry has been received, you will be added to our virtual adoption queue.



**Manny** Six-year-old Manny just wants to hang out by your side, enjoy some petting, and meow at you about how wonderful his day was. He is the sweetest guy you'll ever meet. He's a happy soul and shows it by kneading and making biscuits with his feet. This delightful gentleman might take a little time to adjust to new surroundings, but with patience, he will be your best buddy in no time.

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.

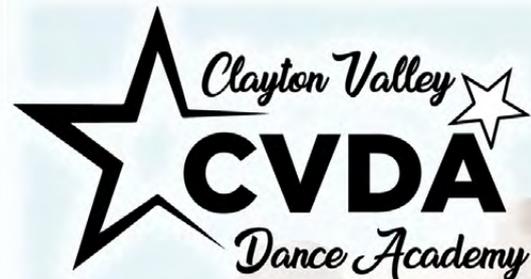


**Kirk** Eleven-year-old Kirk is an older gentlemen with a heart of gold. This happy guy wants nothing more than to love and be loved in return. Snuggles, leisurely strolls, and cozy naps are among his favorite things. As a senior pup, Kirk has some medical needs and requires a little extra TLC, so he's looking for someone who will offer him patient nurturing in exchange for unconditional love and devotion.

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.

### WORD SEARCH PLUS

**Famous People from our Neighborhood**  
Answer: Ms. Katharine Ross



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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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