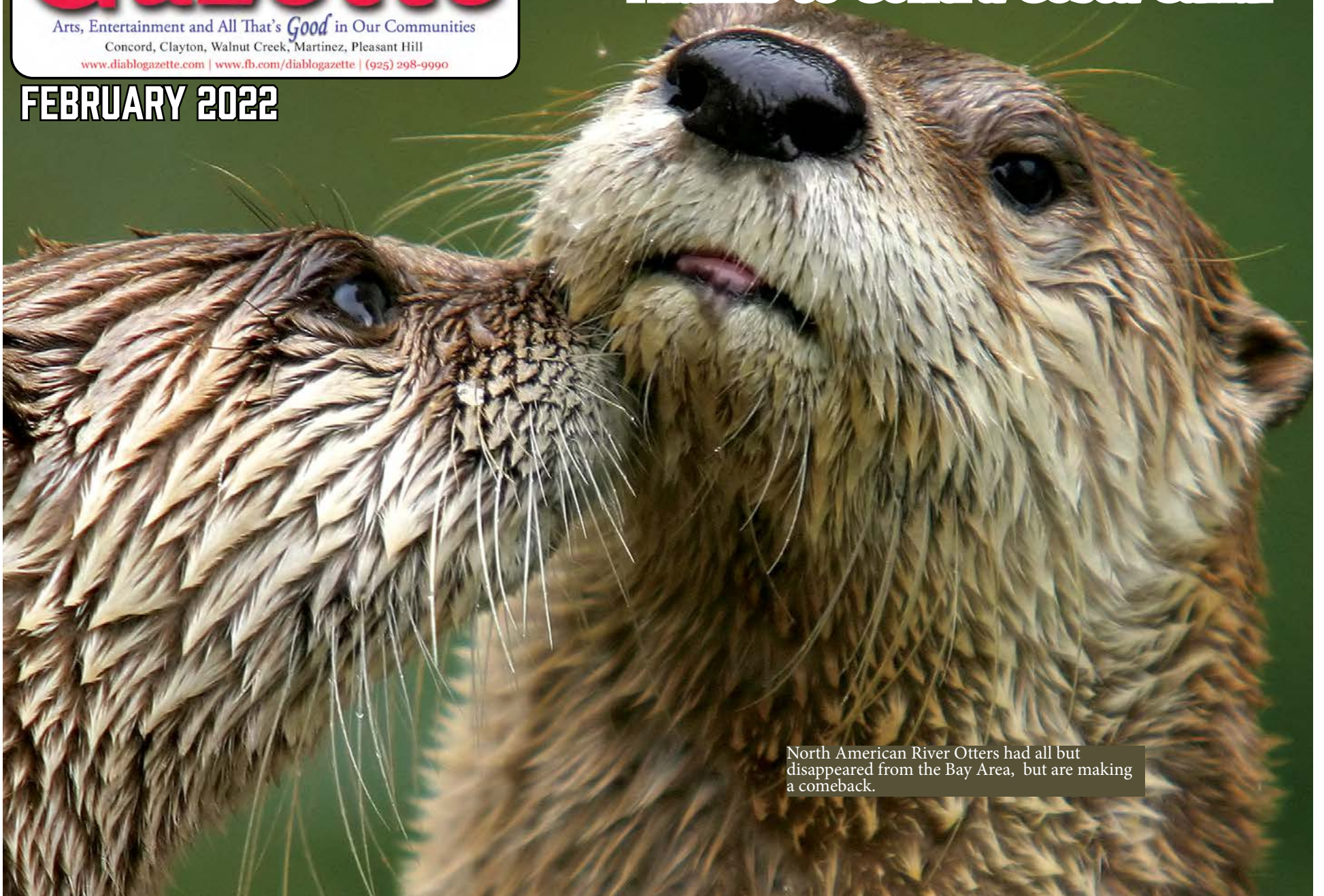


The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
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FEBRUARY 2022

River Otters Returning Thanks to Contra Costa Canal



North American River Otters had all but disappeared from the Bay Area, but are making a comeback.

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EDDM RETAIL

Local
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Concord Skate Park Homeless Sweep * Legal: Shady Internet Terms *
Inspiring Kids to Garden * Clayton - Where to put 570 new Housing
Units? * Best 26 Love Songs * Zooniverse * Calendar of Events

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* All pre-orders must be picked up by 4:30PM. Our Order Desk closes at 4:30PM



Raspberry Eclairs



Valentine Cookies



Gingerbread Hearts



Cupcakes



Strawberry Macarons



Celebrating Black History Month in Concord

I have said it before, one of the best things about Concord is our wonderfully diverse community. In honor of Black History Month, I would like to shine a spotlight on some of our own amazing movers & shakers who make our city a better place to live, every day.

Keith Burks: Investing in Concord Through Business and Community Service



Already leaving an indelible imprint on the Concord community is Keith Burks, co-owner of the popular Concord Tap House, which opened in midtown in 2018, as well as the nearby Frickin' Fried, a new venture that he and his son Myles launched in October 2021.

Besides his businesses, Burks is deeply involved in all facets of the local community, and especially with Concord's youth, having raised his own kids here. "I'm, not just a businessman," he explained. "I go to church here, I live here, I work here, I invest here." It doesn't take long talking to Burks to understand that he is the perfect combination of an optimist and a "doer."

When COVID hit in 2020 – bringing unprecedented challenges to his own business – Burks not only found ways to adapt the operations of his own restaurant, but he also immediately thought of ways to feed the community's first responders as well as the homeless. He has also more recently stepped up by using the Concord Tap House to help raise money for Afghan refugees entering the community.

Chelsea Davis: Seeking Justice for Victims of Domestic Violence



For Chelsea Davis, justice is an everyday endeavor. A recent graduate of UC Berkeley School of Law, she manages two legal services programs at Concord's Family Justice Center that

help families affected by domestic violence. One program connects victims with pro bono lawyers who can assist with obtaining restraining orders, and the other coordinates free, on-site legal consultations.

In these most challenging of times, Davis and her colleagues at the Family Justice Center are providing a one-stop-shop where victims can safely access a wide array of services – from housing and employment assistance to trauma recovery and otherwise unaffordable legal aid that includes accompanying women to their restraining order court appointments.

Davis, who loves to travel and even has a travel blog to share her stories and beautiful photography, started her legal career doing litigation in San Francisco. But her heart was in public service, a tug that led her to the Family Justice Center. She has only been there a year but talked about the ongoing need for these services in the Concord community.

Jacqueline Smith: Giving Children and Families a Head Start



Like Davis, Jacqueline Smith is another woman of color doing remarkable work to support social equity and community vitality in Concord. Her title alone at the Unity Council – Family and Community Partnerships &

Home-Based Coordinator – gives you an idea of the sheer magnitude of her responsibility.

Through in-house resources and deep community partnerships that Smith nurtures, the Unity Council in Concord sets families with limited means on a path to success by offering services that extend from pre-natal assistance to senior care.

The community members served by the Unity Council represent 16 different languages and a wide variety of backgrounds, mostly Hispanic, but also Middle Eastern, African American, and biracial. It is important, according to Smith, that no matter who they are or what their background is, they have a positive experience.

Karen Bell: Co-founder Lettuce Inn for Healthy Dining

It was once reported that Karen Bell has established a fresh food healthy eating haven downtown. The Lettuce Inn was founded in 2011 with the aim of serving healthy meals into people's workday, with delicious salads, sandwich wraps, soups and even pies. They serve food comprised of many of the superfoods so essential to good health for all dietary needs: paleo, vegetarian, vegan, raw-



vegan, low-histamine, gluten, nut or dairy free diets and everything in between.

Bell grew up loving salads. She shares her inspiration on the Lettuce Inn website.

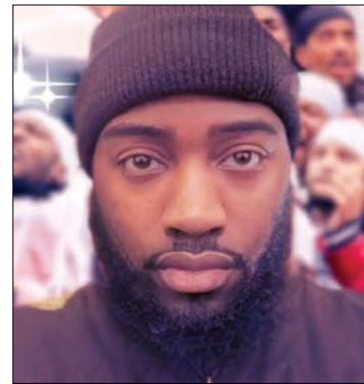
"I used to tell my family that someday I would open a shop that served healthy salads and call it 'Lettuce In,' humored by the obvious pun. She did, but soon had to change the name to Lettuce Inn due to a trademark infringement complaint.

Nevertheless, Lettuce Inn has been a staple to the Downtown Concord dining experience for the past 10 years.

Prior to opening Lettuce Inn, Bell co-founded a school and was an educator for 23 years.

Melvin Thompson: Aquarian Era New Age Shop Feeds Your Soul for a Positive Life Path.

Melvin Thompson is busy spreading Good Vibes. Thompson says he's always been an entrepreneur. He now owns the Aquarian Era New Age Shop on Main Ave. in



Concord and recently added a second store in Richmond. The stores specialize in stones crystals, gems and other items designed to heal the soul. The idea came to him as far back as 2010 when he sold such items at the flea market. When he came across people who seemed to have lost their way, he would give them positive advice, hope, and free stones. Many said it really helped them, so he decided to open the store in 2017.

Stay in Concord

If you have family or friends coming to town, Visit Concord offers fun Stay & Play Packages with your confirmed reservation at any of our nine hotels. Themed packages are filled with goodies like local gift cards, restaurant coupons and wearables. For more information, go to VisitConcordCA.com.

The Concord Visitor Center is located at 2151 Salvio Street, Suite T in Concord. Contact us at info@visitconcord.com or 925-685-1182. Website: www.visitconcordca.com.

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the concordian

by Edi Birsan, EdiBirsan@gmail.com

Notes from the Swept - Skate Park Homeless Camp



We do not have a homeless problem. We have many problems with people who are homeless and there are many aspects that bear on those problems.

Recently at the Skate Park under the BART tracks leading to Concord downtown station, the large field which maybe had one to three homeless set ups, the most common of which was featured in some stories had been there for about four years shown in the picture above.

There were 29 tents that popped up in the last four months or so. I visited the site for the final time on the Saturday before the clean-up and spoke to whomever would talk.

Those discussions served to frame up the complications we routinely deal with when attempting to place or displace the homeless community.

Eighteen people remained to the end of the week notice of the clean out. Most of which were known to the County CORE teams. Five were interested in housing and four of them were not vaccinated but were given Johnson and Johnson one shots. After 14 days, they will be allowed into a shelter. Another two changed their minds afterwards and contacted CORE and are in the Covid Protocol.

Amongst those refusing assistance were those known to be on the street 10 or more years whose position is that they want to be left alone and allowed to forage for their survival. Translation: they want to put their tents anywhere they want.

In this group, there was a major change in some of our demographics in that we had people from Antioch, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Alaska (!) via Antioch and others displaying the high mobility of the group. Advocates want the people of Concord to pay for the establishment of encampments as well as care and feeding. Clearly, this mobile group came because they could.

We, as a society, must decide if and what we are going to provide for those that are homeless. This also means we must decide what to do with the 'rules' for that and to whom does it apply. Does an 18-year-old who drops out of high school who does not want to live at home get a studio apartment and three meals a day or does he have to be a drug addict, alcoholic, petty criminal, suffering from mental illness and live on the street first for how long? By the way, building an affordable apartment building costs about \$600,000 a door. A tiny home costs almost \$100,000, at least.

Roughly 90% of the homeless are dealing with disabling issues. However, 90% of the visible and interactive homeless people encountered are of the chronic and extreme conditions. This causes a great friction between the genuine compassion to help those in need and want versus the disruption, caused and perceived, of those who take the view of 'Get Help or Get Out'.

We need to have COUNTYWIDE, not just shelter beds, but also safe parking and small organized encampments that are safe and, quite frankly, regulated and monitored for compliance. We need to prevent homelessness, but at what costs?

Clearly a "Camp Chaos," open space where people are just allowed to pile in, is a disaster. I will be asking the City and the County to establish a set of requests for proposals to provide different approaches of varying ranges to the many problems. Then we can see what can be realistically and economically accomplished, and which non-profits will provide what in partnering.

Views expressed are Edi Birsan's and not the official echo of any unhoused assemblage. He is housed so as long as he continues to provide food and water for Trixie his resident cat.

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BUSINESS UNUSUAL: Small business plan for digital marketing - keep it simple

By Sheri Nelson, Marketing, the Local Shop

When I talk marketing with small business owners, inevitably the conversation turns to digital marketing. It's then that I see that "I know I should be doing more" look immediately appear on their face. It's usually accompanied by the rubbing of their neck and twisting in their chair.

I get it. Small business owners have way too much on their plate. Each day is jam-packed offering very little time for family, friends, and anything else. These new marketing tools don't replace other marketing tasks. Instead, websites, email newsletters, and social media just add to a business owner's day. And while they are all viable there is little time to invest in the learning and managing of each.

Instead of trying to become an immediate expert on all things digital, start with just one platform and invest a little time each day until you're comfortable with the impact on your schedule and your business goals. Your plan of action should consist of making a list of what needs to happen with that one platform and checking off just one task each day. This is a manageable process that will bring results and less stress.

For example, if you don't have a website, decide if you're going to build one yourself or research having someone else create it. Hint: You don't need a multiple-page site. Make it less overwhelming by creating a one or two-page site with only the most relevant info for customers researching or purchasing your product or service.

If your focus is social media, set up your business page on Instagram or Facebook making sure it's someplace your ideal customer is frequenting. Then start adding posts with pictures of your store, staff, and products.

If you do have a website or business social media already set up, look at adding improvements or updates. Is your message easy to grasp? Can a customer easily make a

purchase or set up an appointment? Is there a way to ask questions before or after they make a purchase? Make each touchpoint simple and positive.

Other updates to consider:

On your website, add a current picture of you and your staff. On your social media, add graduation pictures of your staff in May/June to celebrate Graduation season. This adds a human side to your business.

On your website, add just a couple of links back to credible businesses within your industry to build your SEO. On your social media, thank local businesses who support the community to build a connection with customers.

On your website and social media, add pictures of your business next to local landmarks so your location can easily be recognized.

On social media, follow other businesses that share a similar customer profile. Then post positive comments on their page allowing that audience to get to know you and your business.

Don't spend too much time creating the grandest of websites or social media pages. Both will evolve and always need some kind of consistent updating. Instead, focus on getting your business live online and using the platform's functionality and analytics to generate new customers and revenue.

Doing one small thing daily will quickly have you on the path to engaging digital media for your brand, using the platforms that work best for your business goals, and not even noticing the additional workload.

Sheri Nelson is a passionate marketer helping local businesses make a connection with consumers. She spent 27 years in Bay Area radio before starting The Local Shop. Follow her on Instagram for more tips at the_local_shop_bay_area or email her your questions at sheri@welcometotheshop.com



Peter Cloven
Mayor, Clayton, CA
peter@claytonca.gov



The Future of Clayton – Resident Input Wanted!

Every eight years, the State reviews its housing needs and mandates every city to "make way" for more housing at the local level. The 6th Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) has been tabulated, and Clayton has been assigned 570 units of housing ... an approximate 14% increase to the existing 4,000 housing units in our small city. Given how substantially "built out" Clayton is, there are huge challenges relative to infrastructure, transportation, and environmental concerns.

Clayton is not alone, as every city in California is being saddled with similar dilemmas with the requirements to zone up to 20% more housing. No city desires these mandated changes. All city appeals (including Clayton's) to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) were denied outright.

What will the future of Clayton look like? The city of Clayton is actively seeking input from its citizens! Initial community outreach has included community meetings, and an initial on-line survey of potential housing sites. A preliminary map of housing locations was presented to the city council on January 4, 2022. The next steps are to hone those maps with additional public input.

Clayton will be initiating an assertive campaign to inform the community of the need for their participation in this housing discussion. The campaign will include newspaper, internet/social media, and direct distribution of literature to homes. We need as many voices as possible to discuss how to meet the requirements, while maintaining our City's small-town character and western charm that we all love.

In late February 2022, Clayton will be using an on-line simulation game,

"Balancing Act", to allow residents to place 570 housing units in preliminary mapped areas and identify other potential areas for consideration. In this manner, residents can indicate which locations are preferable towards higher density.

Information on efforts and preparation for 2023 Housing Element can be found on the "Housing Element" button on the front page of the city website www.clayton-ca.gov.

There you can go to the "Get Involved" tab and sign up for updates, so you don't miss important upcoming communications.

Clayton Cares – COVID Relief Funding

Clayton has been blessed with the opportunity to distribute Federal funds received from the American Rescue Plans Act (ARPA). At the unanimous direction of the city council, funds from the first tranche have been designated for small businesses (75%) and individuals (25%) that have been impacted by economic challenges of the pandemic. The first checks were distributed December 2021, but there are additional funds to give to deserving entities. At the January 18, 2022, meeting, the city council increased the amounts of distribution to businesses and individuals to \$10,000. The city is actively seeking those who need the funds so that that financial relief can be provided accordingly. Information on the Clayton Cares Grant Program can be found on the front-page button of the city website.

Contact Mayor Peter Cloven at peterc@claytonca.gov or 925-673-7320.

How can ADUs provide additional income?

A nationwide boom in accessory dwelling units (ADUs), also known as garage apartments, casitas, granny flats, carriage houses or in-law suites, has turned many American homeowners into developers and landlords.

A study released July 2020 by mortgage giant Freddie Mac says there are at least 1.4 million accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, in the United States.

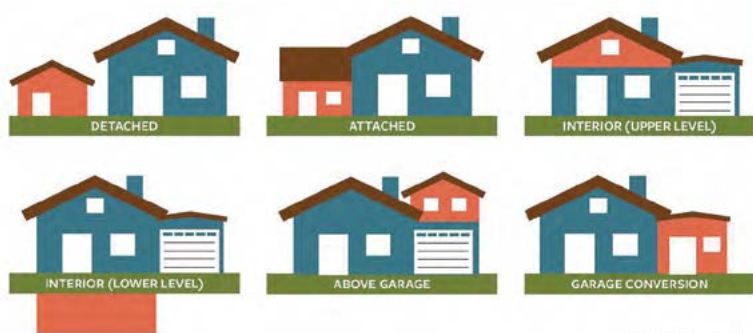
Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist, says the trend is especially strong in pricey metro areas. For homeowners struggling to afford ever-appreciating homes, rental income from ADUs helps pay the mortgage. In cities with little new construction, granny flats add much-needed housing stock, one backyard apartment at a time.

"Clearly we've got a supply problem that's not going to be fixed anytime soon," Khater says. "ADUs can be a small part of the solution."

One of the most appealing things about an ADU is the income potential. Some people build an ADU with the intention of renting it out to others, while others consider building an ADU to live in themselves, then rent out their main house to both downsize and provide a steady source of income.

Homeowners who rent out their ADU, whether long-term or to short-term vacationers, add an income stream to cover some or all their housing costs. It is a strategy known as House Hacking, finding a way to reduce/eliminate your housing costs through someone else paying them.

Because an ADU is an entire dwelling space,



Source: The ABCs of ADUs, AARP

you can easily rent it out for additional income as a home but charge accordingly. You might take a few hundred off the price because it is on your property, so your renters will not have the privacy that they would get from having a property to themselves. But in most places, the cost of rent will still pay for the cost of the ADU in less than a decade.

If you do plan to rent out your ADU, it is recommended to not attach it to your house. If you have the space for a standalone unit, it is the much better option. You will save money because you will not have to pay to attach it to your house, and renters are likely to pay more for it because they'll have extra privacy.

If you price your ADU according to the size and privacy constraints that often are characterized by ADUs, then yes, renting out your ADU is a very appealing option for many renters. Think newlyweds, single professionals, or even empty nesters as prime renter candidates.

ADUs are also great for aging parents. "People are looking for alternatives to assisted living," says Kol Peterson, author of "Backdoor Revolution," a book about ADUs. Assisted living facilities can be more expensive than an ADU alternative

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FEBRUARY 14 - VALENTINE'S DAY

RUTH BANCROFT GARDEN SIP & STROLL - Live acoustic guitarist, complimentary drinks. Evening stroll through the garden. 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Members only. \$20 per couple. 1552 Bancroft Rd. Walnut Creek.

DINNER CRUISES Saturday, February 12. 6:45 PM - 3 Hr. Cruise on SF Bay, with champagne toast, dinner, dancing. Board at 2394 Mariner Square, Alameda. Tickets start at \$99. Luxe Cruises. 510-263-9790.

Carriage Rides - February 14. Enjoy a 20-minute carriage ride downtown Walnut Creek. Up to 10 people. 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM Leshar Center for the Arts. 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets start at \$10. plus \$1.53 fee. Purchase Online Eventbrite.com.

FUNDRAISER



February 19 Community Blood Drive - Hosted by Knights of Columbus of St. Bonaventure's Church. 5562 Clayton Rd. in Concord. 10 AM - 4 PM in the Large Hall. American Red Cross is taking all Covid-19 precautions. Drop-ins welcome, but appointments requested. Call 1-800-733-2767 or Online at www.redcrossblood.org. Enter sponsor code: St. Bonaventure. Or call Denis Thompson at 925-673-720.

CONCORD

FEB. 12: Bay Area Crisis Nursery Annual Crab Feed & Auction. With all-you-can-eat crab, pasta, salad, French bread & dessert. Raffle and silent and live auctions. \$65 Carondelet High School, Garaventa Center, 1133 Winton Drive, Concord. <https://bayareacrisisnursery.org/events/crab-feed/>

FEB. 26: Carondelet High School Drive-Thru Crab Feed. Order Online Jan. 16. - Feb. 16. \$75 "Proceeds from this annual fundraiser will assist in funding various activities that support students and staff throughout the year. More info : <https://www.carondelethhs.org/contribute/events/crab-feed/>

FEB 26: Walnut Festival Association's 16th Annual Crab & Tri-Tip Feed. Featuring crab, tri-tip, salad, pasta, bread, plus auctions, raffles & "Unlock the Cash" game. \$65 Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road, Concord, CA. <http://www.thewalnut-festival.org/2022-crab-feed.html>

MARCH 5: Blue Devils - BD Performing Arts Crab Feed & Dance. With all-you-can-eat dinner, auctions & raffles to benefit Blue Devils B & C Corps. \$75 SILENT & LIVE AUCTION, MUSIC, DANCING, AND FUN, benefitting both Blue Devils B and C Corps. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road, Concord

PLEASANT HILL:

February 14, 21, 23, 28 FIT4MOM Stroller Strides, Pleasant Hill Park 9:30 - 10:30 AM Pleasant Hill Park, 147 Gregory Ln

MARTINEZ

April 9 BAY AREA CRAFT BEER FEST Noon - 4PM The 2022 Bay Area Craft Beer Festival returns to Martinez Waterfront with over 50 local breweries and over 100 beers to sample including Home Brew! Local Breweries, live music, delicious food, vendors and more! The event is 21 years and over only. \$55

EVENTS

Farmers' Markets

Concord Tuesdays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, year-round, rain or shine. Todos Santos Plaza, Concord
Martinez Sundays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, year-round, 700 Main St.
Walnut Creek Kaiser 1425 South Main 10 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Rossmoor - Fridays 9:30am. to 1:00pm., Golden Rain Rd. Shadelands - Saturdays 9:00am.-1:00 pm. North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. North Locust St. between Cole and Lacassie St. (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

Concord aRT Cottage Through February 25

"New Beginnings" exhibit presenting the works from Lamorinda Arts Alliance.

February 20

Watercolors for Beginners - 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Instructor Lisa Fulmer \$50. Register at artcottage.info. 2238 Mt. Diablo St. Concord.

February 12

Mt. Diablo Branch California Writers Club - "Build an Author Platform that Sells Books" at the hybrid meeting at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA. and online.

Ms. Joey Garcia's talk will discuss:
1. How to craft an author bio that promotes your book and platform
2. How to position yourself as an expert so that the media comes to you
3. How to get major media attention

without a huge social media following
4. How to think like a media outlet
5. How to leverage a media interview or presentation so it results in book sales.

Attendees on Zoom, once you complete payment, you will see a confirmation with a link to register. Reservation: go to the CWC Mt. Diablo website for attendance in-person (\$25 members/ \$35 guests) or on Zoom (\$10 members/ \$15 guests) Sign-in 11:00 a.m. Writers Table 11:15. Business Mtg. 12:45, Speaker 1 p.m.

February 19 Tri-Valley Writers - "Structuring Life to Support Creativity."

Author and editor Sandra Tayler will speak to about how to make time for creativity in a Zoom talk. Reserve and pay online at <https://www.trivalley-writers.org>. Reservation deadline: Friday, February 18. CWC adult members, \$14; nonmembers, \$18. CWC student members (ages 14-22), \$6; student nonmembers, \$10. Zoom limit is 100 registrations.

February 19 Concord Parks & Recreation Department's Preschool Open House - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Explore your future preschool classroom at Baldwin Park and Centre Concord. Meet the staff, tour the classes, and learn more about our play-based curriculum!

February 20 Concord Wedding Fair - (12pm-4pm). Win a \$10,000 Wedding Package Grand Prize! Meet with 40+ wedding professionals in multiple areas. Other prizes include 20 Las Vegas winners announced during the Entertainment Segment. Food & Beverage Tasting, Cash Bar, & Cafe open for meal purchase. Parking is FREE. Concord Crowne Plaza 45 John Glenn Drive, Concord \$5

February 26

Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic - The Oakland Zoo will host a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic with a free Pfizer vaccine or booster available to any person age 5 and older.

Participants will receive a free Oakland Zoo Family Pass, good for a one-day admission for 2 adults and 2 children, plus free parking for one vehicle. The value of the pass is \$98. You may use your pass the day of your shot, or at a future date of your choice. Only one pass is available per family.

The clinics will be held from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Zimmer Auditorium at the Oakland Zoo.

MARTINEZ

Through February 27

"Go Figure" - Main Street Arts and Studio 55 Martinez present "Go Figure" a celebration of figurative art and the human body. Artwork from 12 artists that meet once a week at Studio 55 to paint or draw live models. Depicting the human body through oil, acrylic, pastel or pencil yields exciting and unique interpretations of each model. Main Street Arts, 613 Main Street, Martinez, www.mainstreetarts.net. 925-269-8049.

WALNUT CREEK

February 25 The Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society

- 8 PM - 10 PM Train show: The Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society (WCMRS) operates

the Diablo Valley Lines (DVL) model railroad, one of the most mountainous and one of the largest exclusively HO scale model railroads in the United States. Enjoy several running model trains running through miniature cities and mountainous terrain. Located at 2751 Buena Vista Ave. Walnut Creek. (Admission): \$3 Adults, \$2. Children (6-12) / Seniors. FREE for kids 5 years and younger.

February 27

Shell Ridge Ramble Hike: Old Borges Ranch. Bring snacks, water. Questions call 45-543-677 x 32 FREE Leader Ken Lavin. Meet at Patrick Hanna Grove picnic area.

ARTS/THEATRE/ MUSIC

February 12 No Duh



Tribute to No Doubt and DJ Darker-daze. 8:30 PM. Doors open at 7 PM. Food truck, beer garden. Must be 21 and over. Retro Junkie 2112 N. Main St. Walnut Creek.

February 23

Sausage Fest Comedy: Secret Ladies Comedy Show. Retro Junkie 2112 N. Main St. Walnut Creek

March 12 The Big Jangle 7:30 PM-11:30 PM. The Big Jangle (Tom Petty) and Midnight Flyer (Eagles) cover bands. Vinnie's Bar and Grill, 2045 Mount Diablo Street, Concord

Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

February 11-12 "Cinderella's Wedding" presented by Diablo Ballet.

February 12 - Notos Piano Quartet, presented by Chamber Music San Francisco

February 26 - House of Floyd:



The Pink Floyd Concert Experience, their greatest music including non-published and their laser lightshow. 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM \$45

February 25

Brian Stokes Mitchell Broadway legend Brian Stokes Mitchell has captivated audiences in Kiss Me, Kate, South Pacific, and many more. Now he brings his velvety baritone and unstoppable charisma to Walnut Creek for one night only!

March 5 Paula Poundstone 7:30PM-9:30PM, Hofmann Theatre,



Start Planning Your 2022 Home Sale

Is selling your home one of your resolutions for 2022? Now is a great time to list your home. We have been in a seller's market for quite some time, and that trend will likely continue well into the coming year. But even though the market favors sellers, it is still important to prepare for your upcoming sale. Here's what you need to do to get ready.

Get familiar with the market. First things first, get familiar with your local real estate market. Doing your homework before you put your home on the market will help you manage your expectations. Look at homes that are similar to yours and see what they are selling for. Comparable homes should have features that are like yours, including size, amenities, and location.

Clean and declutter. This is one of the most important steps you need to take when planning your 2022 home sale. And now is the perfect time of year to do it. As you put away your holiday decorations, start going through items in your home. Donate those items you no longer need. You might also consider beginning to pack up items you don't often use and keeping them in storage. Once you have decluttered, give your home a deep clean until it sparkles.

Make needed repairs. Even in a seller's market, you should make needed repairs on your home. Making small repairs can have a significant impact on how quickly you sell and for what price. Walk through your home and think like a buyer. What would you like to see fixed? This can include repairing lighting fixtures, fixing leaky faucets, and patching holes in drywall.

Spruce up your curb appeal. Curb appeal is especially important when you are selling your home. What does your home

look like on the outside? Does it need some sprucing up? Some of the ways that you can improve your curb appeal are cleaning up the yard, washing your home's exterior, fixing cracks in the sidewalk and driveway, swapping out lighting fixtures and mailboxes, and painting the front door. Minor changes can really add up.



Start detaching emotionally. Selling your home is a huge financial transaction. And you should think of it from a business perspective. We understand that can be hard to do. You have made many memories in your home, and it may be hard for you to detach emotionally. But the more you can begin to think of your home sale as a financial transaction, the better able you will be to navigate the selling process.

Work with a trusted real estate professional. When it is time to sell your home, you should work with a real estate professional you can trust. An expert in your market can help make sure that you sell your home quickly and with less stress. Get recommendations from friends and family, check online reviews, and interview several agents to see which one you connect with most. Compliments of Virtualresults.net.

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A New Type of New Year's Resolution

By Dr. James Mittelberger

If you are like most people, by February you have already left your New Year's resolutions behind. But if you still want to make 2022 a momentous year, consider a different approach. Traditional resolutions tend to focus on what you should (or should not) be doing. Maybe you tried daily exercising in January, but unless you really care deeply about exercise, the odds are you were not able to sustain it.

A new kind of resolution could be to focus on what is most rewarding to you and do more of that. Once you discover something that really gives you joy, you will want to do it and keep doing it.

Making a positive, impactful change requires 1) understanding what will truly motivate and fulfill you, and 2) a willingness to set up your life to achieve it. It takes asking yourself what matters most to you, being honest with your answers, and digging deep to learn why.

Ask Yourself Key Questions

When you ask yourself, "what matters most to me?" and "what would make the biggest difference in my life this year?" rather than giving a generic answer like "good health," get specific. What it is about good health that is most important to you? This could be sleeping throughout the night or climbing stairs with ease and confidence. Getting specific with what matters most will help you understand what truly motivates and fulfills you.

Next ask yourself, "how will having what matters most impact my life?" Determine why this is important to you. For example, why is sleeping through the night important? Is it to have energy throughout the day to enjoy with your friends or family? Is it to improve your mood? Will a solid night's sleep help you run errands or do household chores? Is walking up a flight of stairs



important so you can go through an airport to travel? Or are there stairs leading up to your daughter's home? Is climbing those stairs important so you can visit your grandchildren? What are the rewards that you care about deeply?

Understanding the why is critical to setting up your life powerfully to make it happen. Creating a meaningful life takes effort, focus and intention. It just does not appear like magic.

Strategies to Have What Matters Most to You

One approach is to discover what matters most to you and then make it the theme for your day-to-day life. If building a strong social circle is what is most important to you, implementing that theme will help you organize your life to create a strong social circle. This strategy will inspire you to do what is necessary, like making phone calls, responding to text messages, attending that book club, inviting a friend to coffee, or

going to the neighborhood BBQ.

Another strategy is to get clear on how you will build doing what matters to you into your life by addressing the five Ws below. This will likely involve scheduling activities and restructuring your time to be consistently successful.

What am I going to focus on?

Why is it important to me?

Who can do it with me or support me?

Where can I do it?

When will I do it?

You may also be motivated by writing out your results as if you have already achieved them. Examples: I easily walk and climb stairs with confidence. I have plenty of energy throughout the day because I sleep so well at night. My friends and I laugh and appreciate each other as we share stories over brunch. Vision boards are also great if you are inspired by photos and other visual cues.

There are many strategies and approaches to fulfilling goals. However, the best strategy is to combine what matters most with what is most rewarding to you. As humans, we naturally want to do what makes us feel good. In these examples, combining exercise

to become stronger with time spent with friends might be the most effective strategy for success.

Impacting Health and Well-Being

As a doctor, one of the most important things I offer my patients is to help them determine what matters most. Then we work together to make it happen. If visiting their grandchildren would give them the most joy but they can't climb the stairs to their house, we set up specific exercises to build that strength. Once they experience that joyful connection, their lives improve. They are happier. They have more energy.

Starting with what matters most is essential to improving anyone's satisfaction, happiness and quality of life. It impacts our health and well-being in every way. I am confident with this approach you will thank yourself next year for it.



James Mittelberger, MD, MPH, is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCSF, and is board certified in Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Hospice & Palliative Medicine. He is the Chief Medical Officer at Center for Elders' Independence, which offers all-inclusive PACE senior healthcare at its newest location in Concord.

pair up!

By Maria Terry

Valentine's Day Compromise



If one likes red and the other white, here is a menu that brings the two together. Classic California Chardonnay and Cabernet are intensely flavored and demand rich dishes that are not overpowered by each wine's substantial oak influence.

Start off the evening with a sheep's milk cheese from Spain called Manchego. In my opinion, Manchego pairs with almost any wine. The Chardonnay goes beautifully with the delicate, nutty flavor of the cheese. Or take it one step further: cut a block of red, quince paste into a heart shape, then smear a small amount on top of each slice of cheese. This trick will bring out the black currant flavor in the Cabernet.

The wines continue to work well with the main course: Gorgonzola Pasta with Grilled Fillet Mignon and Balsamic Reduction.



Marbled beef and a creamy sauce smooth out any rough tannins imparted by the grape or the barrel. All the while, the food echoes the unctuous flavors created during malo-lactic fermentation (a secondary fermentation that almost all red wines undergo, and which is responsible for the buttery flavors found in California Chardonnay). On the side, a Caesar salad offers freshness.

It is not Valentine's Day without chocolate for dessert. My favorite chocolate pairing is chocolate cake with hot coffee. The crumbly texture of the cake washed down with the bitterness of coffee can't be beat.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. www.LaSommelierre.com

Caesar Salad

INGREDIENTS

½ cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic, chopped
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ lemon, juiced
1 anchovy filet

Salt and pepper
Croutons
Romaine Lettuce
Fresh Grated Parmesan Cheese

Blend dressing ingredients. Tear lettuce, and dress lightly. Season with salt and pepper. Add cheese and croutons and toss. Leftover dressing will keep for about a week in the refrigerator.

Make your own home-made croutons by cutting up day-old bread, drizzling with olive oil and sprinkling with kosher salt. Bake for 15-20 minutes at 275°.

Gorgonzola Pasta with Grilled Fillet Mignon and Balsamic Reduction

INGREDIENTS

(2) Grilled Fillet Mignon Steaks, seasoned and cooked to your liking
½ lb. your favorite pasta, cooked

Gorgonzola Sauce:

1 cup heavy cream
3 oz. crumbled gorgonzola

Simmer cream in medium saucepan until it starts to reduce. Add cheese and melt. (Sauce will thicken as it cools.)

Toss pasta with sauce, perch a beef fillet on top and drizzle the reduction over meat.

Balsamic Reduction:

½ cup balsamic vinegar
½ cup red wine
1 shallot, cut in half
1 sprig rosemary
¼ cup honey

Gently simmer vinegar, wine, shallot and rosemary until reduced by half (watch carefully). Remove shallot and sprig. Mix in honey until fully incorporated. Leftovers can keep in fridge indefinitely.

Yield: serves two generously

Top Ten Lucky Foods for Lunar New Year

By Deb Morris, PCFMA



Broccoli is believed to bring wealth and prosperity.

Need a year filled with luck and prosperity? Certain foods eaten during the Lunar New Year are considered lucky. Whether you desire prosperity, health, happiness, or new beginnings, these foods symbolize good things for the coming year.

Around the world, many layers of meaning and tradition are attached to these lucky foods. The most common lucky foods include egg rolls, citrus, noodles, fish, greens, and others.

The preparation and presentation of these foods can take on meaning as well. Fish and chicken are eaten whole, oranges and tangerines are served with leaf and stem attached, noodles are prepared without breaking them, and raisins are eaten, one every hour until midnight. Here are the top 10 lucky foods from around the world.

1. **Whole Fish:** In Germany, eating pickled herring ensures a year of bounty. In Asian countries, it is important to eat whole fish with head and tail attached to ensure a good year from start to finish.
2. **Spring Rolls/Dumplings:** These are made with minced pork and chopped cabbage, carrots, and other vegetables in China. It is said the more you eat, the more money you can make during the year ahead.
3. **Honey:** This sweet nectar is believed to bring good luck and wealth to you and your family.
4. **Leafy Greens:** The green color symbolizes paper money. Think kale, spinach, lettuce, and chard for the New Year. Even parsley is supposed to ward off evil for the coming year. In the southern US, the saying goes, "Peas for pennies, greens for dollars, and cornbread for gold."
5. **Longevity Noodles:** Since these long noodles should never be broken when cooking, they symbolize long life. Many varieties of pasta can be used to ensure good luck in life.
6. **Sticky Rice Cakes:** The main ingredients

are sticky rice, sugar, chestnuts, Chinese dates, and lotus leaves. In Asia, rice cakes symbolize prosperity in all your endeavors.

7. **Oranges, Pomelos, & Tangerines:** These are the most common symbols of the Lunar New Year. Their golden color is believed to attract good fortune and success, while the round shape reminds us of coins. The shape also refers to the old year rolling into a fresh new one. Received with the stem and a leaf attached is even more auspicious. Loads of citrus can be found at J&J Ramos Farm in Hughson.
8. **Broccoli and Cauliflower:** For a blossoming year of wealth and prosperity, eat broccoli and cauliflower. It is a good start to eating healthy for the year, too. As with the greens above, these cruciferous veggies symbolize good fortune and money.
9. **Whole Chicken:** Presented whole like the whole fish, it means family togetherness, the "whole" family. Families will also offer chicken to deceased ancestors for blessings and protection.
10. **Raisins:** Tradition in Spain says 12 grapes or raisins eaten just before midnight, one at each chime of the clock, will bring good fortune for all 12 months of the year, if you finish all 12 before the final stroke.

There are many more food traditions and superstitions that purportedly bring good luck throughout the world. There is the ha'penny pudding in Great Britain, poutine in Canada, Cornish pasties in South Africa, black eyed peas and cornbread in the southern United States, ceviche in Ecuador, tamales in Mexico, pork in the Midwestern US and China, and so many others.

Come by a Farmers Market for your traditional lucky New Year foods. We wish you a prosperous and happy year ahead!

Your metabolism is like the tires on your car

By Carmela Lieras, NASM-CPT



A while back my husband and I purchased a used Nissan Murano. One day after work he noticed I had a flat. It turns out there were two slashes in two of my tires and I had driven home from Berkeley on the freeway not knowing my tires had been damaged. Because the car was all wheel drive, I had to get all four tires replaced even though only two were damaged.

Of course, I did not want to spend the money on new tires and trust me, I tried to avoid it. I am not car-savvy at all so my husband explained to me that only replacing two tires could eventually lead to problems such as causing unnecessary wear and tear on the drivetrain and confusing the traction control system into thinking that the car is frequently losing traction. So, I gave in, and we got all four tires replaced.

The same can be said about our metabolism.

Think about the years of dieting, calorie-restriction, juice cleanses and other detoxes you might have done. Or maybe it was not food-related but more of excessive workouts (boot camps, spin classes, or marathon training) that may have been too much for your body to manage. Whatever your story is, your metabolism is like the tread on your tires. The more miles/stress we put on it, the faster the "tread" wears out. Or we do too much of one thing (working out) and not enough of another (not fueling ourselves properly), causing an imbalance. At some point, your metabolism slows down, feels stuck and literally makes

your body feel like your metabolism needs to be removed and replaced immediately.

But, while tires can be replaced, your metabolism cannot. You unfortunately cannot call your doctor and ask for a whole new metabolism. What you can do is treat your body right to heal it. What does this look like?

Prioritize sleep over working out (meaning, if you get three hours of sleep one night it might be better to avoid your workout the next day, even if you feel like you can push through it)

Make sure you are eating enough total calories for your body and not undereating

Get enough minerals (many of us hydrate well with water but water is void of magnesium, potassium, and sodium – essential minerals for our body to function properly. Try adding an electrolyte mix to your water bottle or sipping on coconut water throughout the day instead.

Take more daily steps. The American College of Sports Medicine classifies someone as sedentary that gets 0-5,000 steps per day and someone active gets between 10,000-12,500 per day.

Your metabolism is with you for life. However, if that sounds unpleasant to you, do not fret. It can be revamped, revitalized and rejuvenated. You just must do the little things each day to treat it the right way.

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River otter populations recovering, assisted by Contra Costa Canal

By Jill Hedgecock



Photo courtesy of SFWildlife.com

River otters have returned to the Bay Area and we have the Contra Costa Canal to thank for their success.

Up until 1961, there were no bag limits on river otters for fur trappers. These losses coupled with water pollution and habitat destruction all but wiped out the Bay Area populations of these rambunctious mammals sometime in the early to mid-1900s.

However, with the passage of laws to restrict trapping and other environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act that improved water quality and fish and crayfish availability, river otters from other parts of California migrated back to the Bay Area.

Rumors of local otter sightings began in the 1980s, but it was not until Megan Isadore, a co-founder and the Executive Director of the River Otter Ecology Project (ROEP), organized a formal study in 2012 that it was confirmed river otters had reestablished their Bay Area roots.



Photo credit: Jaymi Heimbuch: Megan Isadore training intern Emma Sharpe in field documentation

To monitor otter migration, the ROEP enlisted citizen otter spotters. The otter spotter project is a community science program made to collect, map and save otter sightings. It began in the San

Francisco Bay Area and are now accepting sightings from anywhere in North America. Anyone can become an otter spotter and collect a sighting.

Isadore's advocacy for otters, over the past 20 years landed her Bay Nature Magazine's 2022 Local Hero Award for Environmental Education. Her enthusiasm for the species is infectious.

"I love their very wild natures; the fact that they can be adorable, cute, funny, kind to one another, and yet brutal to their prey and each other on occasion. (Isn't that just like humans?),” says Isadore. “I love that they represent another medium-sized predator in our midst. And I love the low chuckling sound they make to each other, ‘Huh-huh-huh-huh.’”

River otters are a fascinating creature. They can dive to 60 feet and swim up to 7 mph. Their fur is waterproof and special membranes on their eyes allow them to see underwater. Females can delay their pregnancy for as long as 10 months after coupling. They have a two-month gestation, so an otter can produce pups a full year after mating. Although the young are learning to hunt by four months, most pups stay with their mother until next year's pups are born.

Contra Costa Canal may be a vital migration corridor. Female otters swim up the canal every spring to raise their pups. Even though the waterway is drained during the winter season, it is possible that otters could still use them to move around since otters spend about 70% of their time on land.

"I've been fascinated by their use of the Contra Costa Canal," says Isadore, "the ladders, the way they take advantage of everything they find to eat and play with, and with their apparent comfort level in very urban areas where they trot back and forth with great toleration of humans."

Otter spotter Karen James, a Martinez



Acting goofy, their playful antics make otters enjoyable to watch. Photos by Karen James

resident, has been monitoring river otter activity for the last six years along the canal, and three major water bodies in the East Bay where otters rear their pups. She became enamored with otters and involved with ROEP after an encounter with one animal at Hidden Lakes Park in the pouring rain. In her excitement, she dropped her camera in the pond.

"I swear that otter was laughing at me," said James.

But the urbanized canal can also pose a hazard. James became a hero for one stranded pup. It had fallen into a flooded part of the canal in Pleasant Hill and could not get out. James and another concerned citizen put a board down, allowing the pup to climb out and be reunited with its mother. In 2021, James monitored three different otter families. The mom with the largest brood of four pups had a helper, probably a daughter from last year.

While the otter's return to our area is a step in the right direction, Isadore believes that rising sea levels may change some of their habitat areas and/or push otters inland. However, their adaptability and broad range of food may make them less susceptible to warming trends.

River otter antics are quite entertaining and a great segue for children and adults to connect with nature. Otters are viewable year-round. But patience and quiet are needed for the best chance to spot them.

You can find the best places to see them or report a sighting by visiting ROEP's online Otter Spotter map, <https://riverottterecology.org/>. If you are fortunate enough to spot one, keep a safe distance, do not feed or harass them, do not allow children or dogs to chase them and never shout at the animal.

Another way to celebrate otters is to participate in ROEP's annual Splash! Art,



Photo Credit: Jerry van der Beek. Volunteer field training — pointing out otter habitat. Otters in the sun photo by Tom Reynolds. Top photo courtesy riverottterecology.org.

Poetry, and Photography contest (opening ~July 1 with a deadline of September 30). Dates are subject to change due to the pandemic, so interested artists should sign up for newsletters on ROEP's website or follow them on social media.

No matter how you look at it, the river otter's return to the Bay Area is an "otterly" great environmental success story.



The California Department of Fish and Wildlife updated their range map in 2019 to include 4,100 square miles of additional river otter range based on Otter Spotter sightings (Melanie Gogol-Prokurat, CDFW, personal communication).

Jill Hedgecock has a master's degree in Environmental Management and a bachelor's degree in Biology. Her love of nature inspired her to write the award-winning novel, "Rhino in the Room".

Explore Zooniverse Become a citizen scientist

By Julie Ross

Two years into the pandemic, activities outside the home continue to be limited. By this time, most of us have completed organizing our junk drawers, become semi-professional bakers, and the most productive among us have even managed to finally digitize decades worth of photos. So, now what?

Welcome to Zooniverse, an easily accessible web portal where you just might find the perfect fit for your curiosity while contributing to real scientific discoveries.

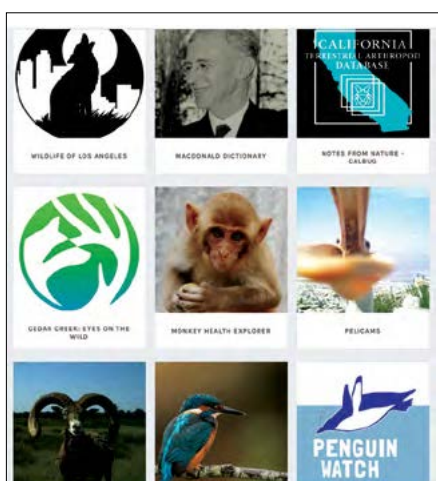
Just like being an "otter spotter" (see above story), at any given time, you can select from more than 50 active online projects.

Choose to review images of faraway galaxies to seek out black holes or newly

forming planets, contribute to cancer research by documenting patterns in lymph nodes, explore fascinating historical records and diaries for in-depth studies of different cultures and societal practices, and/or view videos of wild animals around the globe in their natural habitats to help researchers further conservation efforts. As a citizen scientist, you will be asked to answer simple questions to contribute to the understanding of our world, history, and the universe.

People of all ages and backgrounds can be citizen scientists, "ordinary" people without special training who do scientific work. Some Zooniverse projects are even suitable for kids, such as "Penguin Watch" — if you can count penguins, you're in!

Some projects provide special training.



Just nine of over 50 science projects available that anyone can participate; or start your own project. Explore Zooniverse.org and become a citizen scientist making new discoveries.

For example, "Whale Chat," which involves the identification and classification of humpback whale vocalizations, offers a short, free class, a practice session, and a

quiz to get you ready to participate. Learn to speak whale! (Well maybe not fluently, but doesn't that sound interesting?)

The projects listed change as some are completed and new ones are launched. Here's a sampling of what's available as of this writing: a study of the social structure of beluga whales off the coast of northern Manitoba; a project to protect the threatened greater bilby from drought in Australia (What's a bilby, you ask? It is evidently also known as a "rabbit-eared bandicoot," if that helps); the opportunity to identify dental diseases from radiographs (no thank you); a project assisting NASA to understand Earth's atmosphere by gazing at clouds, and (I swear I am not making this up) a project to help describe the health histories of Victorian postal workers.

With projects covering more than a dozen disciplines from the arts to physics, Zooniverse truly has something for everyone. As for me, I am signing off now to go eavesdrop on some manatees. To get started with your new pastime, visit www.zooniverse.org. Enjoy!



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computer corner
by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech In English

Junk It



We had an interesting customer recently that wanted his laptop computer repaired and after reviewing the device, we recommended not repairing the laptop computer but suggested replacing it with a new one. Did they listen?

Some users ponder the choice between replacing or repairing an older computer. Let me offer some tips on that decision.

Let us say, for the sake of argument, your computer seems to be working normally, everything works like it should except there is an "issue." Before addressing the "issue" consider the age of the computer. Is it older than five years? Did you transfer older software from a prior computer to the one you have now? What kind of "issue" are you having?

First things first, if your laptop or All-In-One (AIO) is five or more years old, one should seriously consider replacement. We recommend that you replace it because it has reached the end of its life expectancy. Laptop and AIO engineers design in obsolescence that renders them disposable. They design them to last three to five years, that is it. If your laptop or AIO has broken parts, physical damage like hinges broken or a broken bezel, the plastic parts, it has done and will only get worse with temporary repairs. Good replacement parts are near impossible to locate, and a son-of-a-gun to install. That translates into expensive.

Desktop computers, on the other hand, can be repaired beyond the five-year mark. However, doing so often puts new technology with older technology. This can be a recipe for further issues. Rule of thumb if your desktop is older than six years, plan to replace it. Servers can go up to eight years before needing to be refreshed. By the way, refresh means buy a new one – cute nomenclature huh?

If you transferred software from an older computer to the one you are using now is the software up to date? For example, Microsoft Office 2007 has expired and no longer supported; Office 2010 will die out soon as well. Older versions of software are usually full of security breaches and support, or the ability to fix those security breaches, is no longer available. (Major corporations have some options here.)

So, back to the story of the customer who brought in a broken laptop, broken bezel, broken hinge and a cracked screen. The laptop was seven years old, but "it works fine and just needs a simple repair," according to the customer. We refused to repair it. They gave us a negative review over our recommendation. I feel sorry for the repair person that "fixed" it because now they have a disaster on their hands and did not do the customer right.



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David George THE NAKED GARDENER



Inspiring Kids to Garden

One of my favorite activities is speaking with local community groups and gardening clubs about eco-friendly gardening techniques, or about how to inspire kids (of all ages) to experience the joys of gardening and exploring our beautiful natural world. I had the pleasure of speaking with the Orinda Rotary club this past month about inspiring kids to garden. I would like to share with you what we discussed and what I have learned through the years.



Grandad and grandson harvesting fresh compost for the garden

First ask yourself the question, what or who inspired you to enjoy gardening or the outdoors?

Was it your mom like me? Maybe your grandma or granddad? Do you remember spring colors or the fragrance of roses, or the deliciousness of fresh-grown produce? Do you remember looking out your window and seeing funny squirrels playing chase up and down a tree trunk? Chances are that whatever inspired you will inspire your own kids or grandkids.

Create opportunities in the garden for you and your kids to work together on a garden project. Give them a set of their own (safe) tools so they can contribute their own effort and not just stand there watching you. Make the project fun and rewarding or maybe into a game, and certainly make it an educational opportunity. Kids love to learn. If you can, make it productive and delicious. Kids love to grow their own plants and veggies, and beam with joy when their home-grown foods end up on the dinner table.

What are some other ways to inspire your kids? You can tell stories on rainy evenings next to the fire about your youthful adventures (or misadventures) in the garden and in nature. Describe funny events, interesting creatures you ran into, or a bad encounter with a cactus (my wife's favorite story). You can document your kid's garden project with photos and written descriptions, and then reminisce together about the experience. And do not shy away from involving "tweens" and teenagers. I was 15 when I fell in love with gardening, and my daughter was in her mid-20's.



The web is full of great ideas to involve your kids in the garden. For younger kids, start a sunny indoor window garden with seeds or seedlings and watch it grow each day. Paint plant labels on rocks, or spell plant names with beads, stickers, or glued sequins. How about a live earthworm composting terrarium? Icky and fun!

For older kids, they can help you build raised planting beds for growing vegetables. There are many free designs on the web. Or they can help you plan then plant a bareroot fruit tree, along with installing an irrigation system. They can name it after themselves and learn how to care for the young tree through flowering and growing season and beyond. One of my

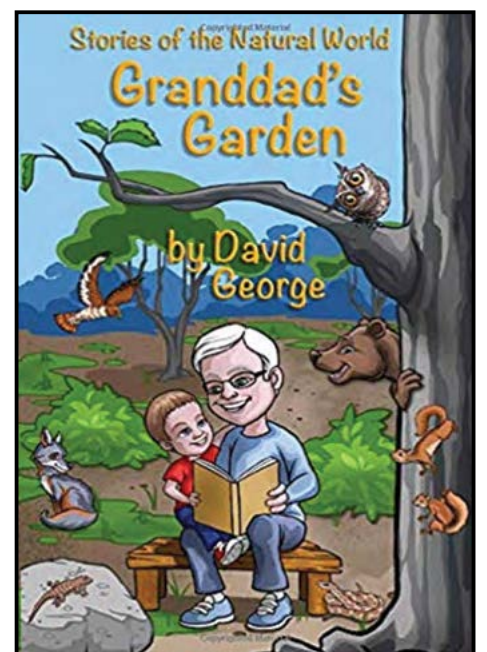


Preparing fresh-picked squash for dinner.

own tweenaged grandson's favorite activities is to harvest and cook fresh organic veggies from his own garden to serve with evening meals.

Nature is magical and is all around us. Inspire your kids or grandkids to love it. After all, you might end up writing a book about it someday. The story begins in your own garden...

Email your comments and questions to: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com. In some cases, these may appear in future columns.





Her Perfect Life

"Her Perfect Life" (Forge Books, 2021, hard cover, 336 pages \$17.99) by Hank Phillippi Ryan is the story of a single mother who has it all. Lily Atwood has a successful career as a reporter, a beautiful home, and a happy, well-adjusted daughter named Rowen. Atwood's celebrity life seems perfect on the outside and her assistant, Greer, is determined to maintain that image. The novel opens with Lily delivering an acceptance speech at an award's ceremony and searching the audience for her anonymous source named Smith. She has no idea what the mysterious informant looks like, but Lily is aware that this person's investigative tips account for her unprecedented success.

The narrative shifts between Lily, Cassie, Lily's sister, and Greer. Cassie's life took a miserable turn during her freshman year in college when her unfortunate infatuation with a professor put her life in danger as well as caused her to cross paths with a drug dealer. A series of bad decisions leaves Cassie with no choice but to disappear without disclosing her whereabouts to her family. Now, 20 years have passed, and Cassie wants to come home. But is it safe?

As the story progresses, Smith's motivation for helping Atwood comes into question. In addition, Lily's past is about to catch up with her. Her sister, Cassie, who disappeared when Lily was seven, has weighed on her and as much as she's yearned for a reunion, she worries her imperfect life would be revealed if Cassie returned. When bouquets of lilies are delivered to Lily's home with Cassie's

name on the gift card, Lily fears her public image is about to be shattered.

Meanwhile, Greer, who is envious of Lily's celebrity, joins forces with Mr. Smith, an investigator with a knowledge of Cassie's history and an interest in connecting Rowen with a father the little girl doesn't even know exists. The twists and turns of the convoluted plot will keep readers guessing to the end. What exactly is Mr. Smith up to and what exactly happened to Cassie?



"Her Perfect Life" was a Publishers Weekly Pick of the Week, ranked by Book-Trib and Crime Reads as a Most Anticipated Book, and rated by Goodreads as Biggest Mysteries/Thrillers of the Year. Fans of Lisa Unger, K.L. Slater, and A. J. Finn will appreciate the twists and turns of Ryan's novel.

Ryan is a USA Today bestselling author. She has won five Agatha Awards in addition to Anthony,

Macavity, Daphne du Maurier, and Mary Higgins Clark Awards. She is also an award-winning investigative reporter at Boston's WHDH-TV earning 36 EMMYs and 14 Edward R. Murrow award. She has been a radio reporter, a legislative aide in the United States Senate, and an editorial assistant at Rolling Stone Magazine. Hank is a founding teacher at Mystery Writers of America University and has served as president of the National Sisters in Crime. Hank has written four novels in the Charlotte McNally series, five thrillers in the Jane Ryland/Jake Brogan series and three other stand-alone novels (Trust Me, The Murder List and The First to Lie). Follow her at HankPhillippiRyan.com.



For the Love of Watercolor

There is something exciting happening at Art Cottage this month. aRt Cottage is offering a beginner's watercolor workshop presented by Lisa Fulmer of the Concord Art Association on Sunday, February 20th.

In this class, you will learn the basics of working with watercolor and paint this fun illustration of a fruit bowl. All supplies are provided.



For more details you can find information at our Blogspot artcottage.info under the classes page.

There is still time to view the current exhibit, "New Beginnings". This show features artists from the Lamorinda Arts Alliance (LAA) and will continue through February 25.

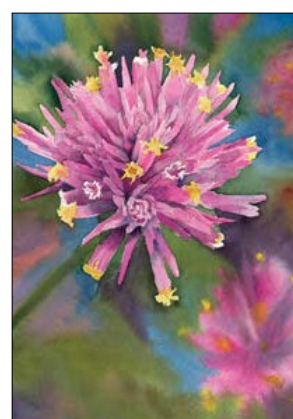


"Lillies" by Ruth Stanton

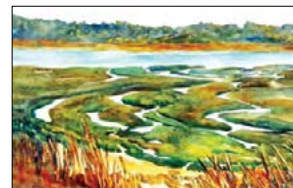


Aaron Vaino paints a self portrait in his first watercolor after school class

Coming in March, People's Choice Award. aRt Cottage will be featuring award winning watercolor artists. Samantha McNally is curator for the exhibit, "Watercolor, A Happy Medium." For this show, visitors will have the opportunity to vote their favorite works on exhibit. Three awards will be presented to the top three artists with most votes at the closing artist reception.



"Flower Burst" by Samantha McNally



"Brittany Patterns" by Juanita Hagberg

Concord author Barrington set to release fourth novel

The Rotary Club of Concord is a little-known organization to many people despite it working in the community since 1947.

In a group of very skilled and knowledgeable people, Dr. Michael Barrington is unusual not because he is the Past President of the Rotary Club of Concord, but for his hidden talents that have especially emerged during the past few years.

Dr. Barrington is a Concord writer, and his books reflect the international aspects of his life and work for Rotary International.

Barrington's novels draw from his international experience. He was born and lived in England through his teen years, moved to France, spent ten years in West Africa during a civil war, spent a year living as a hermit in Northern Ireland, spent a year teaching in Spain, and four years teaching in Puerto Rico before settling in Concord.

As the owner and President of MJB Consultants, he flies all over the world monitoring humanitarian projects in more than 30 countries.

Barrington's first book, "The Bishop Wears No Drawers" focuses on the ten years he spent in West Africa as a catholic missionary priest, three of them during a

civil war when he was stood up to be shot.

In 2019 he published "Let the Peacock Sing" a cliff hanging novel about the French Resistance in World War II. Having lived and studied in France, he knew intimately many of the places he writes about. His father-in-law fought for five years in the Resistance.

In 2020 "Becoming Anya" was published, the story of how a young woman from a remote Irish village becomes a nun, falls in love and finding that the world has left her behind, struggles to find her true self. She grapples with adversity including the tragic loss of her husband at an early age. She experiences the hardship of raising two children during war time and being taken advantage of by an unscrupulous lover. But with family support and determination, she finally achieves her fulfillment as both a woman and a professional nurse.

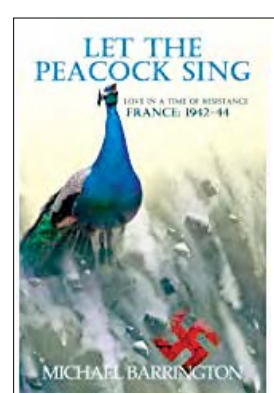
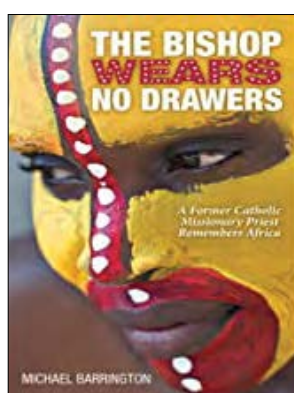
In his latest novel, "The Ethiopian Affair," Barrington is writing a very modern, riveting spy story filled with action and suspense. Is there really a plot to abduct and hold to ransom the US ambassador to Ethiopia? Its international investigation takes us through Somalia, the Sudan, Kenya, Honduras and England. The book will be published in early March 2022.

In addition to writing complete novels, he writes fiction and non-fiction articles which have appeared in numerous periodicals and magazines both in the USA and UK. He also blogs on his website: www.mbwriter.net.

The Rotary Club of Concord is a service club whose sole purpose is to assist people in need, both domestically and internationally, and is open to all adult women and men. Even with the restrictions and limitations imposed during the pandemic, you may have seen Rotarians wearing shirts and jackets with the distinctive blue and gold Rotary "Wheel" logo, (actually, it is a "gear" symbol) volunteering at the Food Bank,



working at the Salvation Army, delivering Thanksgiving Boxes to the Monument Crisis Center or working with the mayor in the beatification and tree planting at several city parks.





A Journey Through the Top 50 Love Songs of All Time

By Natalie Archangel & Mark Montijo

Ahh, Valentine's Day with Spring around the corner; it turns our attention to the many splendored manifestations of love, making February our short, sweet, month of romance. While hearts and cupids adorn shop windows and cupcakes, how better to manifest love than with poignant lyrics and a haunting melody?

Love songs are an integral part of our culture and tend to reflect the times in which they were written and became popular. Each successive generation has its share of songs that wrap themselves around the culture's heartstrings and tug.

A trip through Billboard Magazine's Top 50 Love Songs of All Time is quite an eclectic journey. "Baby Love" by The Supremes clocks in at #49, "She Loves You" by The Beatles occupies the #34 spot while "We Found Love" by Rihanna and Calvin Harris sits at #3. "How Deep is Your Love" by the Bee Gees occupies the #2 spot. Interestingly, the #1 song according to Billboard is "Endless Love," the 1981 duet between Diana Ross and Lionel Richie composed for the film of the same name. These rankings reflect performance on the Billboard charts, which makes them about as objective as possible in a nearly purely subjective arena.

Let's face it, one person's romantic ode may strike the ears of another like the screeching of cats. Fans of Classic Rock or Metal may not feel their hearts skip a beat when "The Power of Love" by Celine Dion comes over the airwaves.

However, there are some songs that show up on many playlists that cut across genres. Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You" (specifically the Whitney Houston rendition) and "Unchained Melody" by The Righteous Brothers are nearly always near the top with "I'll Make Love to You" by Boyz II Men and "God Only Knows" by The Beach Boys close behind.

One of the most popular singers of all time, Frank Sinatra, made "My Funny Valentine" a near anthem for February 14th. It is rumored that his favorite love song was the obscure but lovely "Violets for your Furs."

Elvis Presley, who was arguably more popular than Frank Sinatra, immortalized many love songs in his time but "I can't Help Falling in Love with You" stands out and shows up on myriad playlists to this day.

The most enduring and affecting love songs grab the listener from the opening note and hold on many years after the first listen. Classics such as "I Only Have Eyes for You," "In the Still of the Night" and "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" are three such opuses. This however is a matter of opinion. With so many love songs in so many genres from which to choose, everyone can find at least one song to swoon over.

Please use the QR Code to listen to our special 26 Love Songs playlist created as a Valentine to our readers featuring every song mentioned and a few more to love.



Diablo Gazette: All the Love We Can Get!
laurelcruzjko 26 songs, 1 hr 30 min

"If music be the food of love, play on!"
- William Shakespeare

Chess with Yoo

Composed by Christopher Yoo, 15, Grandmaster, Dublin, Calif.

White to play and win.

SOLUTION:

- 1. e8=N!**
Preventing Qxg7 mate.
1...Qxf5 2.g8=N+!
Promoting with check is crucial to prevent Qxd7.
2.g8=Q Qxd7=
2...Kg6
2...Kg5 3.d8=Q+ +-
White's material advantage is decisive.
- 3. Ne7+ +-**

Hint: Underpromotion

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ANGEL	PASSION	CUPID
BE MINE	PINK	FEBRUARY
BOW AND ARROW	RED	FLAME
CANDLE	ROMANCE	FOURTEENTH
CANDY	ROSES	GIFT
CARD	SWEETHEART	HEARTS
CHOCOLATES	VALENTINE	HONEY
CRUSH		KISS
LOVE		

Solution on page 16





School choice benefits CVCHS students

By Dave Fehte, Interim Executive Director, CVCHS

A transformation in education is taking place throughout California. Parent empowerment is becoming more prevalent, helping to drive higher quality and more educational options for families. Largely because of the pandemic and distance learning, parents are now more engaged than ever concerning their child's education.

In January, we celebrated National School Choice Week which is designed to help parents better understand their school choice options and navigate the process of finding schools or learning environments that best meet their children's needs.

I have been an educator in California for over two decades. Starting out as a special education instructor, I recognized early on that every child is unique and all learn differently. Every child deserves an effective, challenging, and motivating education. Some children might succeed at the neighborhood public school, while others might fit in better at a charter, virtual academy, private or home learning environment.

Because each student has their own unique set of talents, interests, and challenges, having a variety of learning options is crucial. Simply put, school choice ensures that each student can find a learning environment that allows them to be inspired, successful, and happy.

At Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS), our five outstanding Academies function as small, specialized schools within our high school community. Each Academy prepares CVCHS students for professional careers with intensive, in-depth training in their area of interest.

Every student is provided the opportunity to enroll in the Clayton Arts Academy, Digital Arts & Technology Academy, Engineering & Design Academy, Medical Careers Academy or Public Service Academy. The Academies are what sets CVCHS apart from other Contra Costa County schools.

Engineer and Design Project: Mail a Single Pringle®

Take for example Ms. Castillo's Engineering & Design course. For their final semester project, students were tasked to demonstrate their design and 3D modeling skills – construct a prototype system to mail a single Pringles® potato chip. Students were provided the course criteria and material constraints: only recycled materials that could fit in an 8 1/2" x 12" padded envelope and weigh no more than 2 ounces. Once completed, prototypes were shipped to school via USPS with the goal that each potato chip would not break in transit and be edible upon delivery and unboxing.

"This is something that engineers do all the time," said Ms. Castillo. "They are always building things with specific client needs, whether it's a manufacturer, industrial customer, or the average consumer." Nearly all the Pringles® chips were received at CVCHS undamaged. It was a fun and rewarding challenge for the students. The project taught them not only proper packaging and shipping techniques, but most importantly how to design for affordability and cost-saving sustainability.



CVCHS Engineering & Design Academy students (left to right): Isabella Coakley, Anjanette Taguinod, Sam Schaefer, McKayla Sivil, and Jay Guzman.

Below: package designs for mailing a single Pringle chip without it breaking.



Open enrollment offers alternatives to families

School choice also includes open enrollment where parents can place their students in public schools outside their traditional neighborhood boundaries. Since converting to a charter school in 2012, CVCHS offers students from our Concord community -- and even those out of area -- an alternative learning environment.

Last month, CVCHS held a random public drawing selecting 650 students who will become Ugly Eagles in the Fall 2022. It is a moving experience to observe families who go to great lengths to be a part of our great school community. One of the major benefits of open enrollment is that it

provides low-income parents with options that they would not otherwise have been able to access.

Regardless of where families live, parents want a better choice for their child. And they know CVCHS provides a positive, student-centered environment in which all students will be challenged academically and develop the skills and mindsets to graduate as successful, lifelong learners and productive, responsible citizens in a diverse society.

Stanford University bound

I would like to acknowledge one of our impressive students. Jason Shin has been accepted to Stanford University. He will be the first CVCHS student to attend this top-ranked university. Jason scored an impressive 1570 on his SAT and has also amassed impressive academic and extra-curricular achievements. Congratulations to Jason and his proud parents!





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theRIGHTmove
by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
www.BuyStageSell.com

Gen Z: the next generation of homebuyers is here

Many members of Generation Z (Gen Z) are aging into adulthood and deciding whether to rent or buy a home. While the majority of Gen Z have yet to enter the housing market, a large portion plan to, according to a realtor.com report. The report found that 72% of Gen Z would rather purchase a home than rent long-term.

George Ratiu, Manager of Economic Research for realtor.com, says: "With nearly three-quarters of those surveyed preferring to buy versus renting long-term, the housing industry should be prepared for millions of Gen Z buyers to bring a new wave of demand along a similar stage-of-life timeline as the millennial generation before them."

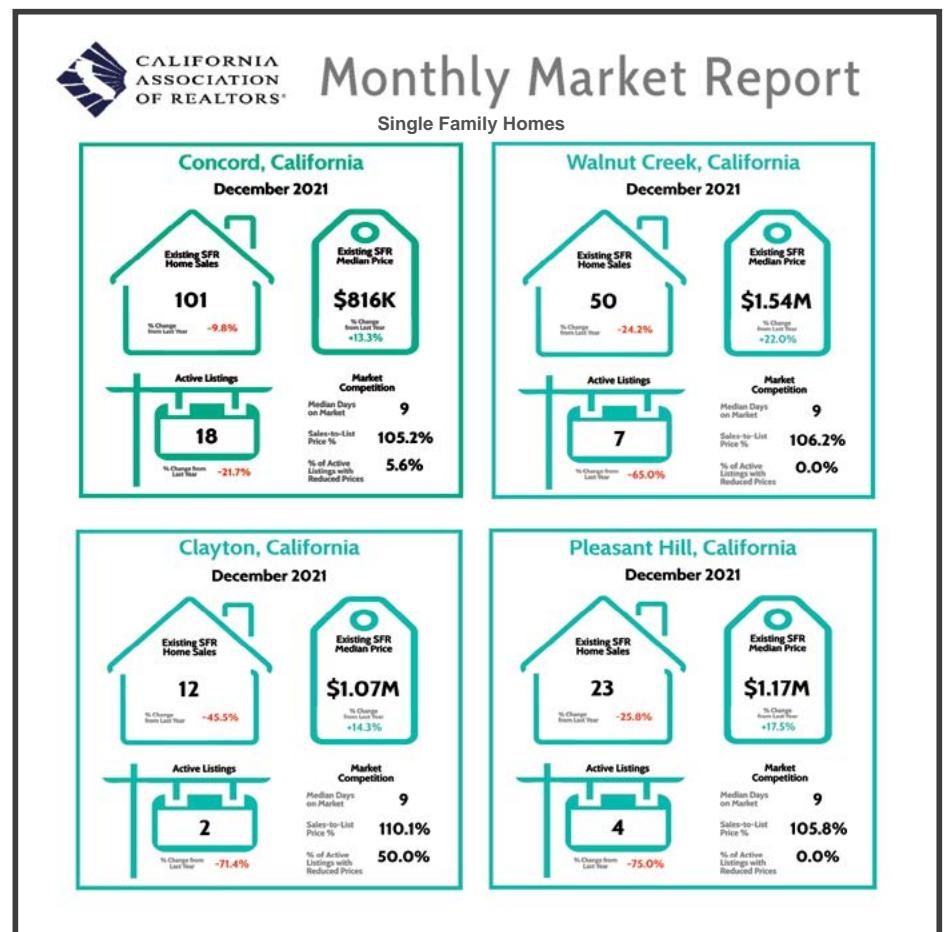
But why do so many members of Gen Z value homeownership? According to the latest Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report from the National Association of Realtors (NAR), young homebuyers — more than any other age group — want to become homeowners because they want to have a place of their own. They feel one of the biggest benefits of homeownership is having a place that they can make their own by customizing it to their style and personality. Whether that is the décor, painting, or renovations, when owning a home, there is no lease or property owner that can limit the possibilities. In addition, owning a home provides much greater long-term stability and security than renting. Home ownership protects from steadily rising rental costs because the monthly mortgage payment is typically locked in for the length of the loan. A 15- or 30- year fixed interest rate loan is the preferred mortgage.

As a first-time buyer, whether you are just getting started on a homebuying journey, you want to learn more about the process, or you are fully committed to buying your first home this year, it is especially important to connect with a trusted real estate advisor soon as you will not be the only first-time buyer in the market.

According to a recent survey from realtor.com, a majority of first-time buyers surveyed are looking to purchase a home in 2022. The survey notes, "First-time home buyers retain their optimism despite a challenging housing market in the past year. Hoping to achieve their goal of homeownership and provide a comfortable space for their families, young buyers are setting out to learn what they can about the market and setting their list of priorities for their home purchase."

That means you will likely face strong competition from other first-time buyers. To get a leg-up on that competition, work with a real estate professional to make sure you have the support you need to make an informed and confident decision. Their skill in preparing the offer package, the loan, documentation that goes with it and the nuances that influence the seller and seller's agent are sometimes the difference between an accepted and a rejected offer.

If you are planning your next move, you are not alone. Just know it is never too early to consider the benefits of homeownership over renting. To learn more, let's connect today so you have a trusted professional on your side to help you explore your options.



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Attention CA Homeowners, you may be eligible for mortgage relief.

CALIFORNIA MORTGAGE RELIEF

California budgets \$1 billion for mortgage relief

California is now offering \$1 billion in mortgage relief, providing help to as many as 40,000 struggling homeowners.

The California Mortgage Relief Plan supports homeowners who have fallen behind on their housing payments due to pandemic-related hardships. The program will help homeowners make past due housing payments - up to a maximum of \$80,000 per household - by making a one-time direct payment to the mortgage servicers. Importantly, this is not a loan and will not need to be paid back.

To see if you are eligible for the relief plan, please visit <https://camortgagerelief.org/who-is-eligible/>. Applications will be accepted online; visit <https://camortgagerelief.org/> and click on the "Apply Now" button on the upper right-hand corner to get started.

If you have any questions, contact Assemblymember Tim Grayson's District Offices at 925-521-1511.

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legalbriefs

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

Be careful where you “click” on the internet

We all do it. We constantly “click” on the internet. Even as a lawyer, I must admit I have many times accepted “terms and conditions” without reading them (though I do routinely skim them to see if I am somehow agreeing to pay money). I usually am drawn to the “fine print” on advertisements and offers, as my legal training has instructed me that most of the important stuff is often buried in there.

I came across a recent case, decided by one of the California Courts of Appeal entitled *Sellers v. JustAnswer LLC* that provides an illustration of what I am talking about. It is a lesson for not only people like us who do the “clicking,” but also a lesson (an expensive one) for those who get us to do the clicking.

JustAnswer LLC created a website that allowed a person to submit a question to an “expert” such as a lawyer, doctor, veterinarian, electrician, etc. All you had to do was type a question in a box. However, when you clicked “continue” a page appeared that stated “Join for \$5 and get your answer in minutes.” In smaller print, the page stated “Unlimited conversations with doctors — try 7 days for \$5. Then \$46/month. Cancel anytime.” After filling in credit card information, you then clicked on the “Start my trial” box. Below this box in very fine print, it stated that by clicking the box you were agreeing to the “terms of service.” If someone clicked on the “terms of service” hyperlink he or she would be directed to 26 pages of “terms.”

Before I discuss what happened in the case, what do you think so far? Is this website deceptive? Would you be surprised if you clicked on the “start my trial” box and found out months later that your credit card was being charged \$46.00 per month?

Well, Tina Sellers was surprised. She had submitted a question on the JustAnswer website but was unhappy with the response. She contacted JustAnswer and was told that for \$39.00 she could receive a more complete response. The court opinion states that she “declined that option,” though I suspect she told the representative, “f... that!” She thought she was done with Just Answer until she noticed months later the \$46.00 per month charges on her credit card. She then apparently did a little Google research and found hundreds of complaints from people complaining of being duped into a JustAnswer membership when they thought they were paying \$5 to have a question answered. This led

to a visit with a lawyer and the filing of the class action lawsuit.

JustAnswer responded to the lawsuit by referring to the 26 page “terms of service.” Seems like those terms required all claims to be pursued through arbitration (instead of through court) and barred class actions. Hmmmm — would the Court enforce these “terms” and throw the case out? Nope.

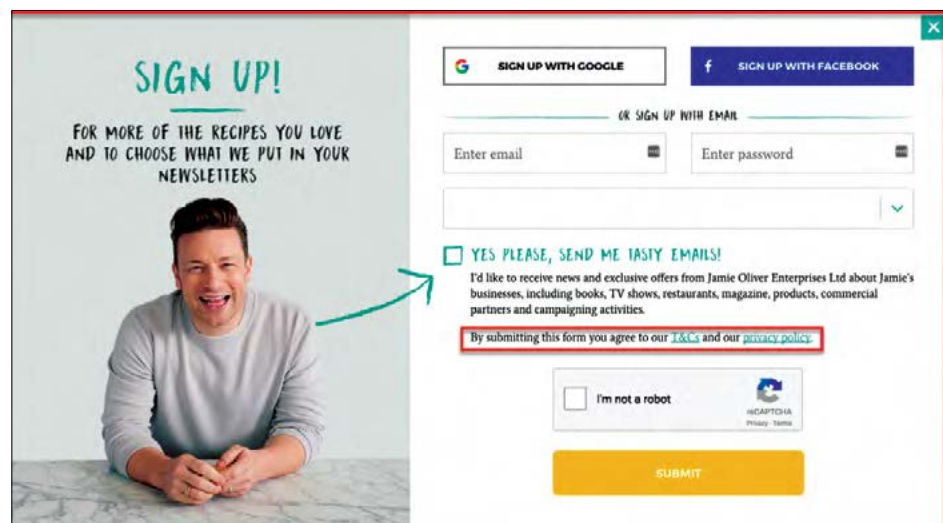
The Court noted that earlier cases had established that “browsewrap” agreements were generally not binding. Browsewrap agreements involve websites that only have a hyperlink to the “terms of service.” Just because there is such a hyperlink does not bind the user to the terms of service. At the other end of the spectrum, the Court noted, are “clickwrap agreements,” where the user clicks on an “I accept” or “I agree” button. These agreements are usually enforceable. Similarly, “scrollwrap” agreements are enforceable — these require the user to scroll through the terms of service and click a button agreeing to those terms.

The Sellers case though involved a “Sign-in-wrap” agreement. With a “sign-in wrap” agreement the user is purportedly bound by the terms of service simply by clicking on a “sign in” or “sign up” button.

The California state appeals court noted that federal courts around the country had upheld “sign-in-wrap” agreements so long as there were words on the website informing users that they were bound by the terms of service by signing up for an account or continuing to use the website. The state court though concluded that the law in California was stricter.



In California, there is an “Automatic Renewal Law” which addresses the problem of internet users getting duped into automatic renewal memberships. The law requires that the terms of enrollment must be presented in a clear and conspicuous manner. Clear and conspicuous is defined in the law to mean in larger type than the surrounding text, or in contrasting type, font, or color to the surrounding text of the same size or set off from the



Example of a clickwrap agreement courtesy of termly.io

surrounding text of the same size by symbols or other marks, in a manner that clearly calls attention to the language.

The court concluded that JustAnswer's website did not provide clear and conspicuous notice to users of the terms of service. The court concluded that users by clicking “Start my Trial,” were not likely expecting that their “trial” would include 26 pages of terms. The court

commented that JustAnswer could easily have adopted a clickwrap or scrollwrap form to avoid problems.

What is the bottom line? Websites should use clickwrap or scrollwrap forms to bind users to renewal agreements and other terms of service. If sign-in wrap forms or browsewrap forms are used, beware.

Concord Hires Sr. Assistant City Attorney to Guide Land Use Projects, Advise Planning Commission



Concord City Attorney Susanne Brown announced the hiring of Thomas Capriola as Senior Assistant City Attorney, effective Jan. 24, 2022.

Since 2010, Mr. Capriola has served as Deputy County

Counsel for Napa County, where he was the primary attorney for the Department of Public Works. He also previously served as an associate at McDonough, Holland & Allen (2007-2010), which advises and represents public agencies on a variety of legal matters.

Mr. Capriola will primarily work on land use issues and he will advise the Community Development Department (consisting of the Building Division, Engineering Division, Housing Division, and Planning Division), and the Concord Planning Commission.

“We are excited to welcome Tom to our team,” Brown said. “He brings extensive knowledge of local government law and procedures, and we know that he will be a tremendous asset to the City of Concord.”

Mr. Capriola has considerable experience in government contracting,

public finance, and real property. Over the past few years, he worked with staff to re-envision the development of the Napa County Airport and take steps to facilitate it, including a successful unlawful detainer action and negotiating with the largest fixed base operators in the industry.

As a member of Napa County's Emergency Operations Center, he advised staff through 12 declared emergencies, including the 2014 South Napa Earthquake, 2017 Napa County Fires, 2019 LNU and Glass Fires, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this role, he helped secure millions of dollars of additional federal funds to reconstruct damaged County infrastructure.

“I find it incredibly rewarding to help staff and decision makers navigate complex issues and realize positive results for the community,” Capriola said. “I look forward to continuing those efforts in Concord and am thrilled to be a part of Susanne Brown's team with the City Attorney's Office.”

Mr. Capriola received his law degree from the University of California, Davis, and his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

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Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

STORMY

By Jill Hedgecock, jillhedgecock.com

Ruby is Concord's international social media celebrity with more than 260K followers on Instagram.com/rubydooby_do, 752K Facebook followers and 1.8M Tik Tok followers. Ruby is also featured on the covers of novels, "Between Shadow's Eyes" and "From Shadow's Perspective." Each month Ruby features a hard to place dog in foster to help them find their forever home.



Stormy is a knockout with her one-brown and one-blue eye and a stylish white stripe traveling down her muzzle and has an amazing personality to boot. She's a 66-pound, approximately 5-year-old, black, white, and tan Siberian husky/shepherd mix. She loves being petted and takes food gently from your hand. Stormy is people and dog friendly, but she can occasionally be selective about her doggy housemates so a meet-and-greet will be important if she'll have canine siblings. Stormy:

- Loves, loves, loves attention
- Is housetrained and good on leash
- Fine being left alone
- Not good with cats or children
- Knows basic obedience
- Needs moderate grooming and exercise

NorCal Sled Dog Rescue is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded by donations. The goal of NorCal Sled Dog is to rescue, rehabilitate, foster, and find homes for unwanted, abandoned and abused Northern breed dogs: Siberian Huskies, Alaskan Malamutes, Samoyeds, and mixes of these breeds. Stormy will need an owner experienced with Nordic breeds. Her adoption fee is \$500.

Diggin' It

February 22nd is World Spay Day. World Spay Day was established in 1995 by The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association to help increase awareness of the need for spay/neuter to save animal lives. ARF, located at 2890 Mitchell Dr. in Walnut Creek, offers spay and neutering services between \$60 and \$100. The East Bay SPCA also offers this surgery at low prices and has special rates for low-income households and for owners of pit bulls (\$75) in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. They are located at 410 Hegenberger Rd. in Oakland. Owners of multiple pets can also qualify for discounts for up to two animals per year.

Free Pet Food. Furry Friends Pet Relief

located at 708 W 2nd St, Antioch assists struggling families and the homeless to feed their pets in the East Bay. To receive a month's supply of free pet food, proof of spay/neuter for every pet in the household is required. Appointments required (925)481-2294. Pickup is between Tues. and Th. From 2 to 5 p.m.

A Bone to Pick

Dog Park Hazards. Because dogs come in all shapes and sizes with the little ones at the mercy of the large breeds, many dog parks, such as Heather Farms, have since established separate small and large areas.

Problems can still arise if dogs are prone to get overstimulated or are predisposed to aggressive behavior. Not every dog is suited to a dog park environment. Unneutered males, under socialized, and even normally calm dogs, can instigate dog fights when placed with too many other canines, which may result in people or dogs being bitten. The owner of the aggressive dog could end up paying expensive veterinary and medical bills.

While doggy play areas can be a safe environment, it only works if everyone follows the rules. Because cities and towns establish their own rules, read each placard before entering and follow the criteria. Pay attention and watch for warning signs of overstimulation or if your dog is becoming an annoyance to another pooch.

Pick up dog waste. If your dog is sick or your female dog is in heat, stay away. Dogs should always enter and exit on leash. Always keep your leash handy and never take off your dog's collar.

It is best to leave small children and young puppies at home. Make sure your dog respects wildlife and habitat.

In addition to Heather Farms, other nearby dog parks include Baldwin and New Hall Community Parks in Concord.

ARF ADOPTION STARS Parrot & Monica

by Cole Kuiper

Looking for a furry friend? Visit arflife.org to view all of ARF's adoptable animals or read more about ARF's adoption process. If you see an animal you're interested in on our website, just fill out an online inquiry form!

Watson



Five-year-old Watson is an active boy looking for that perfect family that loves to spend plenty of time outside on adventures such as embarking on long hikes, going to the beach or playing endless games of two-toy fetch. Watson would make the perfect companion for a household that has been looking for a reason to get up off of the couch and out of the house more often. Watson has a positive history with other dogs and currently weighs 22 pounds.

ARF adoption fees: \$250 for an adult dog, \$350 for a puppy (<6 months), \$125 for a special-needs dog, \$175 for a special-needs puppy (<6 months), and \$125 for a senior dog (7+ years).

Stormi



Three-year-old Stormi is a sweet girl who's ready for a home to call her own. She's shy at first, but once she's comfortable, her relaxed and gentle personality will blossom. Because of this, Stormi would do best with a patient adopter and a quiet home. Bonus: her adoption fee has been prepaid by a generous donor.

ARF Adoption fees: \$100 for an adult cat, \$150 for a kitten (<6 months), \$150 for two adult cats, \$250 for two kittens, \$50 for a special-needs cat, \$75 for a special-needs kitten (<6 months), and \$50 for a senior cat (7+ years).

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Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery

Together through our 2021 year-long Give Back Program, we donated \$8,908 to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. Helping to distribute 17,816 meals to our neighbors in need.

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Share your experience with us.

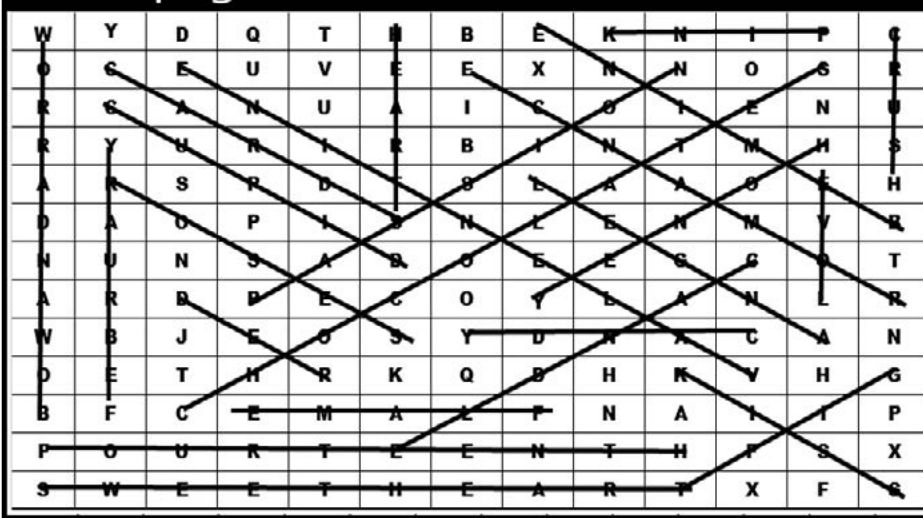


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WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

from page 13





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