

See COUPON SAVINGS PAGE 3

Exotic Reptiles of the World Concord



Photo by Ann King: Bentley, Bearded Dragon

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from the Publisher

David King

Our Piano Playing Dragon

Exotic pets. On the cover is my daughter's pet bearded dragon, Bentley. I was uncertain about bringing this alligator into our home, especially since we have two cats that seem to be skittish of everything. But it turns out that Bentley is quite easy to keep and mesmerizing to watch. The way bearded dragons move their heads and eyes implies some undetermined but fascinating level of intelligence....until I saw it try to eat the flower designs on our Desert Rose dishes.

We let Bentley roam around the house, providing us with some fun Facebook photo opportunities such as this cover photo of Bentley seen playing "Great Balls of Fire" on the piano, rivaling Warner Brothers infamous singing frog. Bentley playing bocce with his blueberries, beer pong with our miniature beer pong set, or lounging in his hammock are great staged photo memories.

Bearded dragons are native to Australia. However, Bentley is native to San Francisco as we purchased him from a previous owner who could no longer tend to Bentley's needs. But where would one find a bearded dragon or other exotic reptile in Contra Costa County? I went to Hoffmann's

Reptile store in Concord to learn more. Yikes! Story on page 4.

As summer winds down, fall festivals kick in. St. Demetrius is hosting its 40th Greek Festival at its church across from Concord Pavilion. There will be plenty of authentic Greek food, Greek wine, and Greek culture to enjoy.

Then soon after this event, Oktoberfest is here. Clayton, Walnut Creek and Concord all have Oktoberfest events. Yes, Concord is launching its first



Oktoberfest (which Diablo Gazette enthusiastically is a sponsor) at Todos Santos Plaza on October 12 and 13th with the help of Concord Chamber of Commerce, Visit Concord and

others. It is being organized by Justin Crossly, producer of the Concord Brewfest, which is a great indicator of what's in store. Read more on this on page 9.

Enjoy reading this month's edition. Be sure to like us on Facebook.com/diablogazette.



concordmayor

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

Shotgun Blast of Issues



Being on the City Council, you must deal with a bunch of things that come in all shapes and sizes even though the press may seize upon a major issue or two. There is a lot going on and here is a shotgun blast of some of those:

Tutoring - Should someone be allowed to tutor more than one person at a time in their home? By a slim margin of 3 to 2, the Council ordered staff to look at administrative approval methods to accomplish this. The big concern is that maybe someone might park in front of a neighbor's house or (God forbid) drive on that street.

The concern on the other side is why have a bunch of kids that want to learn and cannot find someone to teach them?

Pot for Potholes - Having failed to put the special tax to a decision of the voters, the Council also failed to put the special tax on pot before the voters.

We have a few establishments looking to manufacture and lab test and the as-yet-to-be-decided-upon dispensary issue. However, a thought was raised suggesting a community benefit agreement in the permit (if granted) so we can take a small percentage of revenue and apply it directly to pothole repair. Pot for Potholes.

Plastic Straws - A few people independent of each other have asked us to consider getting rid of the one-use plastic straw. Bending straws are a major feature in my house and amongst many with disabilities or little kids. However, there is serious environmental reason to reduce plastics. The Council decided to take this up after the first of year when the restrictions on polystyrene goes into effect.

Round 2 on District Election Protocols - Unable to get into the meat of actual proposals in the first meeting, the Council is going to meet again to talk about specifics such as: Should positions on the Commissions such as the Planning Commission be assigned on a priority of District representation? How do we deal with official outreach when in the past we might have a meeting at Centre Concord, or the Monument or Holbrook Heights? Now we have five districts. How do we

circulate information within the Council when constituents from outside one district deal with another? Stay tuned, this can only get more complicated.

New Openings - Dunkin Donuts (home of Boston Kreme) opened on Clayton Road. Also opened on Clayton Road, the Tap House joined a growing number of microbrews and the like. They feature a very good catfish slider.

Alekis manufactures special brain cancer killing machines that are straight out of Star Wars. They will be employing about 100 people in North Concord and are looking forward to taking 20 acres in the Base.

Retail Reality Check - Despite the perception that there is a direct relationship between vacancy in a shopping area and crime, the hardcore police data reveals that that is not the case.

The proactive focused sweep on a few centers caused some unintended consequences. The Monument Corridor folks may be petitioning the city to establish their own acceptable standards, such as we have a separate one for the Downtown area.

Bike Rental - The ever slowly encroaching appearance of rental bikes in various colors that are dumped on the sidewalks and shopping areas are getting attention. Staff is thinking of different ways to protect the right of way on sidewalks while helping people who want point-to-point bike drops. Stay tuned for more on this one.

Art in Public Places (and Private) - The policy committee debated on the ways to support public art. Overwhelmingly it was agreed that public art enhances quality of life and property values in both commercial settings and residential parks. How to fund it is the next issue. NO Spirit Poles, will we ever live that down?

Art at City Hall - A shameless plug from your friendly Mayor, letters went out to all public and private schools in Concord to submit just one piece of art from each school. Three pieces of regular art and one graphic art piece will be selected in the Mayor's Art Gallery at City Hall. Have your kids bug their principal on the issue.

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Happy 150th Anniversary Concord Specials

Concord is 150 Years Old! A lot has happened in Concord over the past 150 years. Businesses have come and gone. On this page, you will find two of Concord's oldest businesses, Lehmers and Alpine Pastry and Cakes. The others are the newbies that we welcome and invite you to give them some of your Welcome-to-Concord love too. In other words...

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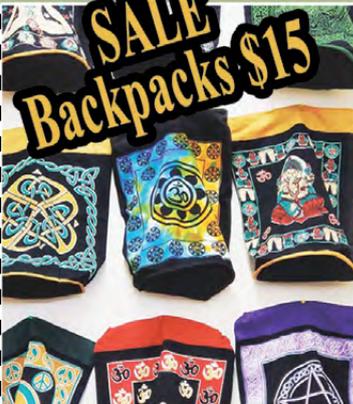
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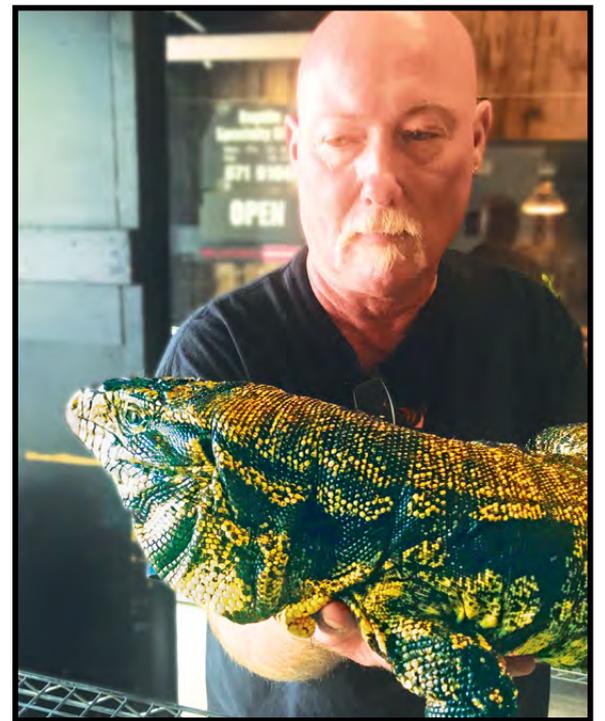
by DavidKing.

In 1980, Concord had about 10 pet stores. There was no Pet Co. or PetSmart. No internet. Dan Hoffmann had opened his 800 square-foot store, an exotic pet store in Concord on March 3, 1980. He was 22, married, a high school graduate, with no business training, and a lot of passion, especially towards reptiles.

He scrounged together \$3,000; \$1,000 in savings, \$1,000 loan from his father, and \$1,000 borrowed from a credit union. He opened in what used to be the Sugar Plum Bakery building located at 2359 Concord Blvd.

The store is still operating, 38 years later, making it one of Concord's longest surviving businesses.

Being a new owner of a bearded dragon, I thought I would research the exotic/reptile pet lovin' world for this article. Dan has been interviewed by a variety of publications over the years. Some of the information contained in this article is derived from those articles. I met up with Dan at the shop. He greeted me by showing me some



Dan Hoffman introducing his Tegu.

of the more exotic larger attractions in the shop: A Tegu, two Rhino Iguanas, and an albino Burmese python (which he has two). As he let each out of their vivariums, one father in the store felt the need to grab his son. Why take chances, right?

However, as intimidating as they

Continues on Page 20...



Jennifer Stojanovich
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

7 Reasons Offers Get Rejected

You've been searching for a new home for weeks, and you finally found "the one." You submit an offer and start to daydream about life in your new home. Unfortunately, you get a reply from your agent saying your offer has been rejected. Though this is a common occurrence, it doesn't remove the sting. If you're wondering why your offer was rejected, here are seven common reasons.

Your offer was too low. It's not unusual for a seller to reject an offer if they feel it was too low. This is especially true if the home just came on the market and you didn't offer the full listing price. The seller still has plenty of time to see if other, better offers come in that are closer to the price they're willing to accept. Conversely, even if the home has been on the market for some time, your low-ball offer may not be accepted simply because the seller is insulted. It happens.

You're not pre-approved for a mortgage. One of the most important things you need to do before you begin searching for a home in earnest is to get pre-approved for a mortgage. Getting pre-approved signals to the seller that you're a serious buyer. It demonstrates that you've been vetted by a lender and will be able to secure financing. In a competitive market, it is essential that you get pre-approved.

You asked for contingencies. It's typical for offers to contain contingencies. For example, the sale could be contingent on the home inspection, adequate financing, or sale of your current home. If your offer contains several contingencies for the sale, this could be of great concern to the seller. They may question whether you'll ever make it to the closing table. Even if you offer more money than any

other buyers, your offer could be rejected if there are too many contingencies.

Your earnest money deposit was too low. When you make an offer on a home, you will often put down an earnest money deposit once the offer is accepted. This is usually two or three percent of the purchase price and shows the seller that you are serious about buying the house. This money is held in escrow until closing. If your earnest money deposit offer is lower than what is considered normal, this could cause the seller to reject it.

You requested concessions. Concessions can be anything from asking the seller to pay some of the closing costs to requesting that all the appliances be included in the sale. Concessions can really chip away at what the seller will make on the sale, so it's not unusual to have your offer rejected because it contains too many concessions.

The seller has unreasonable expectations. We don't live in a perfect world, and sellers are human just like everyone else. Even if you know that the offer you made was on par with comps in the area, it could still be rejected because the seller has unreasonable expectations about what their home is worth.

Someone made a better offer. Finally, your offer may have been rejected because another buyer put in a better offer. In this case, it's best to accept that this house wasn't meant to be yours and continue your search.

Compliments of VirtualResults.com.

Jenifer Stojanovich is a broker associate at better Homes Realty in Clayton. Read more home buying and selling tips at www.jenniferstojanovich.com.



legalbriefs

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

Posting Anonymous Reviews on Website? Be Careful!

Angry Allen scowled and told his lawyer the following story. "I quit working for this startup in San Jose last year and I anonymously posted some negative comments on GlassDoor. Now my ex-employer is trying to get my name from GlassDoor and is threatening to sue me for revealing confidential information!"

The lawyer, being somewhat older and not so savvy regarding the internet, responded: "What is GlassDoor?"

Rolling his eyes, Angry Allen explained that GlassDoor is a website where employees and ex-employees can anonymously post information and reviews about their employers.

Though the old lawyer often had to rely on his daughters to navigate the internet for him, he did know the law and he explained to Mr. Allen that people have a right under the First Amendment to speak anonymously. And, companies like GlassDoor have the right to object to providing information about persons who post on their website.

The problem though, explained the lawyer, is that if Mr. Allen's posting did reveal trade secrets or confidential information, then GlassDoor would be required to reveal Mr. Allen's identity. The ex-employer would have to convince a Court that the posting did reveal trade secrets or confidential information before the Court would require disclosure of Mr. Allen's name.

The same analysis would apply if the anonymous posting was defamatory. Defamatory means that the posting contained some false fact that damaged the ex-employer's reputation. Statements are not defamatory if they are true or if they are only opinions.

The bottom line, explained the lawyer, is that everyone must be careful in making anonymous reviews on websites like GlassDoor, Yelp, etc. If those postings violate the law by being defamatory or by revealing trade secrets or confidential information, for example, the offended party may be able to find out who made the posting and go after them.

In *GlassDoor, Inc. v. Superior Court*, decided on March 10, 2017 by the Sixth Court of Appeals, an ex-employer, Machine Zone, Inc., sued GlassDoor trying to get the identity of an ex-employee who made a negative anonymous post on GlassDoor. The trial judge ordered the release of the name of the person who made the posting, but the appeals court reversed that ruling finding that Machine Zone had not shown that the posting revealed any trade secrets or confidential information.

So, before you fire off a negative review, think twice, and maybe have someone else review it to make sure you are not stirring up trouble for yourself!

(Originally posted April 2017)

Tell California Not to Ban Hemp!

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has banned CBD Hemp Oil from local retail after years of open sales in major retailers. Your right to safe and beneficial Hemp CBD in California is in jeopardy. Tell Dr. Karen Smith, Director of the California Department of Public Health "NO to banning Hemp" and demand that she withdraws the Department's misinformed FAQs. If Dr. Smith does not hear from YOU, California may become the first state to ban Hemp CBD. Help us inform Dr. Smith that California consumers demand continued legal access to the safe and beneficial Hemp CBD products. Send this message to the following:

Dr. Karen Smith, Director of Public Health: karen.smith@cdph.ca.gov
Douglas.obana@sfdph.org
Mohammed Malhi, SF Public Health" mohammed.malhi@sfdph.org
Stephanie Cushing, SF Public Health: stephanie.cushing@sfdph.org

I write to you to express concern and correct misstatements in the FAQs regarding industrial hemp and cannabidiol (CBD) that were released by the California Department of Health (CDPH) on July 6, 2018.

I ask that the CDPH withdraw the FAQs to give the issues addressed therein further consideration.

First, the FAQs runs counter to the will of the California electorate when it overwhelmingly passed Proposition 64.

Proposition 64 contained provisions authorizing the commercial production of industrial hemp in California. Second, the Agricultural Act of 2018 is being sent to conference to resolve differences in the version of the bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The bipartisan bill passed by the Senate by a vote of 86-11 included a provision explicitly and fully legalizing

industrial hemp and all products made from it, including CBD oil, in the United States.

Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill No. 710 into law. That bill explicitly recognized that "industrial hemp products and derivatives containing cannabidiol" are "currently available under state law." (AB 710, Sec. 1.)2.

The misstatements in the FAQs create confusion in the market and lead a reader to erroneously conclude that a CBD product with zero THC is de facto illegal. Such "guidance" from the CPDH deprives California consumers access to products that are not only safe, but beneficial to one's health. The FAQs represent an improper use of the CDPH's regulatory power in so far as the CPDH bypassed the process and procedure required to promulgate a regulation. We implore you to retract the FAQs and reconsider the issues with the input from people with the knowledge of the relevant issues.

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Cannabis Education Day Event at Todos Santos Plaza

On September 8th Contra Costa Norml will present the first community-wide Cannabis Education Day ever held in Contra Costa County. "Despite overwhelming support throughout Contra Costa County for Proposition 64 legalizing adult use of cannabis, all cities east of the Caldecott tunnel passed laws mostly prohibiting commercial cannabis activity," noted Renee Lee, Co-Chair of Contra Costa County NORML. "As we have gone city by city, participating, listening, reflecting, we have become convinced that 80 years of Reefer Madness dies hard. Our communities need education. This is the first step. We want people to learn and accept that cannabis is okay for adults"

NORML hopes that this event will

educate and inform local communities about cannabis and the cannabis industry. The Cannabis Education Day is a free, community event at Todos Santos Plaza in downtown Concord from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Vendors and speakers will address topics (and answer questions about) the history of prohibition, community safety, legal issues, and compassion programs that are designed to help the most vulnerable patients, such as veterans and seniors. This is a non-smoking, non-consumption event and no cannabis sales are permitted.

For more information, contact Contact: Renee Lee, reneelee9068@yahoo.com or Greg Kremenliev, gkremenliev@gmail.com.

Your 2018 Guide to Bay Area Events

The Diablo Gazette's

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

FUNDRAISERS

Pancake Breakfast - Supporting Veterans of Foreign Wars – 2nd and 4th Sundays includes eggs, pancakes, sausage, beverage. 8 – 11 a.m. Willow Pass Road, Concord \$5 buys a terrific breakfast. <http://www.vfwpost1525.org>

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

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

September 9 The 7th Annual Delta Harvest Run Returns to Brentwood - All running levels: Half marathon, 10K, 5K, and 1-Mile Family Fun Run. Proceeds will support East Contra Costa County food banks/pantries, shelters, and the funding of college scholarships for local high school students. For more information go to: <https://deltaharvestrun.itsyourrace.com>

September 14 Local Hazing Awareness

Non-Profit to Host Annual Monte Carlo Night The AHA! Movement, a local non-profit advocating hazing awareness, will host their annual black tie masked ball Monte Carlo Night at the Pleasant Hill Recreation Center. 6:00 - 11:30pm 320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill.

October 17 Bowling for Kids to benefit Bay Area Crisis Nursery. 6PM. Clayton Bowl Concord. Raffle, awards. \$175 Team of 4 includes 2 games, shoes, hot dog, soda, and T-shirt for each player. to register contact Diane Ramirez, 925-437-2783. Sponsored by Century 21 MM Concord.

OUTDOORS

Farmers' Markets
Concord Tuesdays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, rain or shine.
Martinez Sundays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, Main St. and Estudillo.
Walnut Creek Diablo Valley Farmers Market Saturday 9a.m. - 1 p.m. Shadelands Business Park, N. Wigett Lane and Mitchell Dr. Also, from
Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market - North Locust St between Giamona and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round. (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

SEPTEMBER 14-16 St. Demetrios 40th Greek Festival Enjoy authentic Greek food, Greek wine, Greek culture. 1955 Kirker Pass Rd. Concord. www.CCGreekfest.com.

SEPTEMBER 15 82ND Annual Parade "Building Dreams and Making Memories" 6PM. downtown Walnut Creek to kick off the annual Walnut Festival. Free. \$5 Parking.

23rd Annual Lafayette Art and Wine Festival 4 stages of live music, 3 kid zones. Free admission, Sat. 10am-7pm, Sunday 10am-6pm. Downtown Lafayette. www.lafayettefestival.com.

September 29 3rd Annual CBCA Skip Ipsen Memorial Bocce Tournament at the Ipsen Family Bocce Park. 16 teams (4-6 players/team). Entry fee is \$400 per team includes SWAG, bocce, and food! Final four will play for cash prizes (\$1,000, \$600, and \$400 for 1st-3rd respectively). Profits to support the Concerts In The Grove and CBCA's college scholarships, athletic equipment, school equipment, civic improvements, and feeding and clothing people.

CLUB/SUPPORT GROUPS' NEWS AND EVENTS

September 7 Disaster Preparedness 10:00am-3:00pm at Rossmoor Event Center 1021 Stanley Dollar Dr. Walnut Creek. RSVP by Aug 24 at nsalgado@mowdr.org or call 925-937-8311. FREE.

September 8 Stephanie Chandler presents "Book Marketing and

Launch Strategies: Essential Tactics to Grow Your Audience and Increase Book Sales" Mt. Diablo branch of the California Writers Club meeting at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Ms. Chandler is a frequent speaker at business events and on the radio, and has been featured in Entrepreneur Magazine, BusinessWeek, inc.com, and Wired. She is CEO of nonfictionauthorsassociation.com, and nonfictionwritersconference.com. Sign-in starts at 11:00 am. Luncheon 12:00 followed by speaker. \$25 for CWC members, \$30 for guests.

September 11 Dan Ashley to speak at Clayton Valley Woman's Club. Dan Ashley, anchor of ABC7 News, has enjoyed his 30 years on television and being a reporter. The CVWC is a local non-profit organization of women serving our local communities. For more information, call Linda at 415-652-3503 or Sheila at 925-672-7947 or visit us at www.claytonvalley-womansclub.org

September 13 Women's Networking Luncheon - Get to know other women in business while playing fun networking games! 11:45 am - 1:00 pm. Concord Chamber Office 2280, Diamond Blvd., Suite 200 Chamber Members - \$10; Prospective Members - \$25

September 14-16 40th Annual Contra Costa Greek Festival- enjoy Greek food, wine, dancing, music, crafts and more. St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church. Friday 5pm-11p.m. Sat. noon-11 p.m., Sun. 11am-7pm. 1955 Kirker Pass Rd. across from Concord Pavilion Free. \$5 parking. www.ccgreekfest.com.

September 23 Dan Hanel - author of "IN THE SHADOW OF DIABLO, Mystery of the Great Stone House" 2:00 PM Come and hear Dan speak about the historical research that went into the making of this intriguing book. Snacks. Books will be for sale. Concord Museum and Event Center, 1928 Clayton Road, Concord. Free. Free parking behind the Galindo Home. Contact Vivian Boyd at 925-818-2312. For more information on Martinez Archive Crawl, see story on page 9



See story on page on page 9

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

Clayton Concerts in the Grove September 15th – East Bay Mudd

Martinez Summer Concerts and Movies Thursdays 6pm-10pm. at Main St. Plaza. Martinez

2018 Jazz at the Leshher Center

Sept 14 Sarah McKenzie Tickets on sale now at lesherartscenter.org or call 925.943.SHOW(7469) Presented by Diablo Regional Arts Association at the Leshher Center for the Arts | 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

September 28 MUSIC & MOVIES UNDER THE STARS - Jungle Book Civic Park. Music 5:30 p.m.; Movie 7p.m. Bring your family and enjoy free Music & Movies Under the Stars.

September 14 High Steppers - Dance to the 50's, 60's, and 70's music. In the Betty. Martin Barnes Hall. 1928 Clayton Road, Concord. From 7:00 to 9:00 PM Admission \$10 Water \$1.00 Free Parking behind the Galindo Home. For more information, contact Carol Longshore, 925-785-5032.

SEPTEMBER 17 AFTER SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAM After School Music Program For children in Kindergarten through 6th Grad.(Older kids are welcome to come as helpers.) Every Monday – September 17th to November 12th 4 -5 PM. \$80 per child or \$150 per family. To register or for more information, please call 672-4848. Classes to be held at Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church, 1578 Kirker Pass Rd., Clayton.

October 6-7 Clayton Oktoberfest. Downtown Clayton. Craft beer, German food, live music, carnival rides & more

October 12-13 Concord Oktoberfest Todos Santos Plaza. Free admission. Beer, Live Music, Dancing, Food, Kids Zone. ConcordOktoberfest.com.

October 20 Walnut Creek Oktoberfest Autumn starts with Walnut Creek's third annual Oktoberfest, free, day-long, family-friendly festival recreates the beloved German traditional Fall celebration. **Nov. 1-17th.**

Clayton Theatre Company presents "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee", William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin's hit musical. Six awkward middle school spelling champions learn that winning (and losing) isn't everything. \$20-\$25. Endeavor Hall 6008 Center St., Clayton www.ClaytonTheatreCompany.com or www.brownpapertickets.com . 925-222-9106

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2018 Music Events at Todos Santos Plaza Concord		
Thursday Night Music and Market Series		
Date	Show Billing	Tagline
8/30/18	Foreverland	An Electrifying 14-Piece Tribute to Michael Jackson
9/6/18	Lafayette Studio Big Band	Seventeen piece Count Basie style Jazz Orchestra
9/13/18	Annie Sampson	Concord's own Queen of Blues
Special Events		
Date	Show Billing	Tagline
10/4/18	Concord's 3rd Annual "Dark Side of the Moon" Night	A Family Friendly Music and Science Extravaganza

Out to Lunch

Nola Brings Taste of New Orleans to Concord

by Richard Eber

When one enters the premises of Nola Po'boy and Gumbo Kitchen 2606 Willow Pass in Concord, the décor and atmosphere reminds one of world famous New Orleans eateries. It's like Mr. Scott of Star Trek just beamed you up from the "Big Easy."

Fortunately, the food is just as classic. The creole-style cooking Nola offers comes from owner Darryl Roberts family recipes. Here, one can enjoy the authentic Southern cooking of fried chicken wings and waffles, catfish,



Sometimes, Nola will feature specials off the menu such as traditional dishes like Jambalaya and Étouffée. Étouffée is a dish of shrimp or crayfish simmered in a sauce made from a blond roux then served over saffron rice. I've had both and I can say that I've yet to find anyone that comes close to the Cajun authenticity that Nola brings to these dishes.

In keeping with the traditional southern fare theme, Nola's dessert menu offers sweet potato and pecan pies and house made red velvet cake. On Sunday mornings, folks stand in line for their Beignets, which are a prized French donut that melts in your mouth, best served with a cup of chicory coffee.



oysters, shrimps, gumbo, etc.

Much of the ingredients they use including andouille sausage are imported from Louisiana. Nola even offers alligator for which I had a bite from a friend's plate. This "other, other white meat" was tender and tasty; although, had I been blindfolded, I doubt I could have identified what I had just sampled. The restaurant even imports New Orleans local beer. I opted for a raspberry infused "Purple Haze".

It takes a few visits to taste all the dishes Nola makes. One of their best is fried chicken and waffles. They use a boneless product that is breaded with a secret recipe and cooked until crispy and juicy. The taste is incredible. When paired with a Nola's Belgium style waffle, sufficiently flavored with cinnamon and vanilla, consider it culinary utopia for me.

As a side, red beans and rice are equally delicious with a strong flavor of peppery spice and a hint of Patton's sausage. Nola's cheese grits helped moderate the flavors of some of the other spicy dishes. The homemade Gumbo reminded me of that which is served in small French Quarter café's in New Orleans.

Po-Boy fans should take note. Nola offers a large array of traditional Po-Boy sandwiches including southern favorites of crab cake, catfish, pulled pork, shrimp, oyster, chicken, and of course alligator. All are served on a soft French roll with shredded lettuce, tomato pickles, spicy mustard and mayonnaise. Yum!

Each of the sandwiches I tried was unique and could be a complete meal.

Kudos to Bee, who has been serving patrons of Nola since it opened six years ago, and Chef Erik who has helped bring the tastes of New Orleans to Concord.

Nola is not the only Cajun inspired restaurant in the area. Tom's Crab Shack on 1851 Sutter Street in Concord and Rockin' Crawfish almost directly across the Street at 1847 Willow Pass offer their own version of that genre of food. Both restaurants specialize in shrimp boils where they are served hot on the table ready to be peeled and consumed with assorted sauces.

This style of food is reminiscent to the casual dining found on the "Redneck Riviera" along the Gulf Coast where one buys a pile of just-off-the-boat boiled shrimp dipped with spicy cocktail sauce and an order of greasy hush puppies. Consuming this feast on the tailgate of a pick-up truck while swigging on a Lone Star beer is a piece of heaven for me.

Neither of these places can duplicate this atmosphere but they are fun places to visit. Peeling crayfish can be a challenge, but so is the reward eating succulent sweet meat. Both restaurants also feature clams, crab, oysters, and the like.

Rockin' Crawfish also serve some tasty sides of which my favorites are their garlic noodles and Cajun fries. Tom's Crab Shack offers Corn on the cob, sausages and potatoes with their combos. At each of these restaurants, the real stars are the seafood entrees which is served in great abundance.

Y'all should give them a visit.

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OCTOBER 13TH 12-6pm

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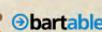
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Canning Preserves

the Best in Season

September is one of the best months to enjoy the last of summer's fruits and vegetables while discovering early fall produce. Juicy peaches and nectarines sit side-by-side with plump figs, sweet grapes, and crisp apples. Fall's acorn and butternut squash share tables filled with zucchini and yellow summer squash. What could be better than enjoying both seasons at once? How about savoring them all year long when you take up canning and preserving?

Canning your own jams and jellies is a rewarding and fun experience that will let you enjoy summer produce in the middle of winter! Make a few batches of peach or strawberry jam, piquant nectarine onion chutney, or spicy pepper jelly. When you feel the need for a taste of summer just reach in the cupboard and enjoy!

Canning has a fairly short history, beginning with Napoleon Bonaparte requiring preserved food be sent to his hungry troops in 1785. Preserving fruits and vegetables became necessary during World War II when most food was rationed and sent to the troops. Many people started backyard "Victory Gardens," growing and canning their own produce. When canned food became commercialized, it was cheaper to buy products at the supermarket, rather than making it yourself. This created a decline in homemade products.

We have seen a resurgence in the do-it-yourself food preservation movement in the last 20 years because of the desire to know what's in their food and where it comes from. Many people have rediscovered the enjoyment of canning their own jams, pickles, and sauces.

You should have no problem finding a variety of fresh produce to can at your local farmer's market. Pick your favorites among fresh peaches and nectarines,

(apples arriving soon), big bell and hot peppers, luscious tomatoes, plus all the strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries you will need for making homemade jams.

Consider pickling cucumbers for a tangy batch of dill pickles with this recipe and start canning!



Garlic Dill Pickles
 15 pounds pickling cucumbers, about 5 cucumbers per pound (FT Fresh)
 1-1/4 packages pickling mix (a package is about 6.5 ounces)
 4-3/4 cups white vinegar, 5%
 1 tablespoon mixed pickling spices
 20 cloves of garlic
 1 bunch fresh dill
 1 tablespoon hot pepper flakes (optional)
 9-1/2 cups water

Wash cucumbers and thinly trim off each end. Cut in spears of halves. Pack in sterilized jars. Add a clove or two of garlic and a sprig of fresh dill to each jar. Mix water, vinegar, spices, Mrs. Wages mix, and pepper flakes in a pot. Heat to boiling. Fill packed jars with this liquid, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Add sterilized jars and rings. Process in a water bath canner for 15 minutes. This makes about 10 quarts, enough to last all year! Recipe can be cut in half. Recipe: Debra Morris, PCFMA Staff.

40th Annual Greek Fest September 14-16

Food and wine are not only a Greek tradition, they are both art forms. Come sample an assortment of outstanding great wines at the wine bar including rich reds and delightful whites from the Greek Isles. Pair them up with your favorite Greek dishes like moussaka or souvlaki.

Enjoy music from the live band Synthesi and watch lively Greek dances. Then feast your eyes on a variety of Hellenic arts, crafts and treasures.

If you favor the flavor of Greek food, you can go to the ccgreekfest.com and find actual recipes to popular Greek foods such as Baklava, Mousakka, souvlaki, Spanakopita.

The Contra Costa Greek Food & Wine Festival offers a collage of Greek experiences: music, dancing, art, cuisine, wines and hospitality. Come have a taste of Greece September 14-16.

Few events become such a staple of Concord's entertainment scene. This is one of them. Admission is free, (parking \$5). Proceeds from the event go to local charities. The event is located at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church at 1955 Kirker Pass Rd., across from the pavilion. Yassou!



Schedule of Events

Friday – September 14, 2018
 5:00 PM Festival Day One Opens/
 Opening Prayer
 5:00 PM Live Greek Music for the day by "Argonauts"
 6:30 PM Church Tour
 7:00 PM St. Demetrios Greek Dancers
 9:00 PM Church Tour
 11:00 PM Festival Day One Closes
Saturday – September 15, 2018
 12:00 PM Festival Day Two Opens
 12:00 PM Live Greek Music for the day by "Argonauts"
 1:30 PM Church Tour
 2:00 PM: St. Demetrios Greek Dancers
 5:00 PM Church Tour
 7:00 PM St. Demetrios Greek Dancers
 8:00 PM English Vespers Service (in Church)
 9:00 PM Church Tour
 11:00 PM Festival Day Two Closes
Sunday – September 16, 2018
 11:00 AM Festival Day Three Opens
 12:00 PM Live Greek Music for the day by "Argonauts"
 2:00 PM: St. Demetrios Greek Dancers
 4:30 PM Last Church Tour of the Day.
 6:00 PM: St. Demetrios Greek Dancers
 7:00 PM Festival Day Three Closes.
 Thank You/Sas evharistoume!



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The Martinez Archives Crawl: A Family-Friendly Event

The Contra Costa County and the Martinez Historical Societies are co-hosting the first ever Martinez Archives Crawl this September in celebration of American Archives Month.

The Martinez Archives Crawl is a free event for all ages being held Saturday, September 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in downtown Martinez. The Crawl is designed to provide an engaging and family-friendly event to increase community awareness of research opportunities in the Martinez area. The public will be able to view an array of archival materials, speak with archivists and librarians, go on special behind-the-scenes tours and participate in a fun engaging scavenger hunt.

“What better way to learn about the resources of the various archives in Contra Costa County than by bringing them together for one day and providing the public with a fun interactive way to explore and “hunt” for cool stuff” stated CCCHS President John Mercurio. “There is always something new to find in an archive and if you’re not careful, the minutes turn into hours and the next thing you know, you’re eager to write a book! I did and had a lot of fun digging through the collections of our county’s history.”

The Crawl will offer a scavenger hunt for students grades K-6 and 7-12 as well as adults. Scavenger hunt participants will answer archive and history related questions for their age group at each location. Each participant with the correct answers will be entered into a drawing to win an i-Pad or i-Pad Mini.

“As the keeper of historical records for Contra Costa County, we’re excited to partner in the Martinez Archives Crawl,” County Clerk-Recorder Joe Canciamilla said. “We’re excited to share the county’s

fascinating history and heritage with residents. People will leave the event with a new-found appreciation for where they live.”

All archive locations are within walking distance from one another making the Archives Crawl an easy and fun event for all ages. Participating archive locations include: Martinez History Museum, 1005 Escobar St., Contra Costa County History Center, 724 Escobar St., Martinez Public Library, 740 Court St. County Clerk Recorder’s Office, 555 Escobar St.

The Martinez Archives Crawl is made possible through a \$2000 grant from the Martinez Community Foundation, a \$500 donation from each co-sponsor (CCCHS & MHS), and in-kind donations from Chevron Federal Credit Union and several downtown Martinez businesses as well as the many hours of the Crawl committee and partners.

The Contra Costa County Historical Society is the steward of the County’s archives and the administrator of the County History Center. The History Center houses the largest collection of historical records in the County. Its mission is to preserve, protect and provide public access to the records and heritage of Contra Costa County.

To learn more and register for this event, visit www.MartinezArchivesCrawl.com



Concord Launches Oktoberfest October 12-13

For one weekend in October, Todos Santos Plaza will turn into a mini-Munich, hosting an authentic German Oktoberfest with a beer tent, live music, singing and dancing, strongman contests, food truck fare, a kid’s area, and more. This is a fun, family-friendly, free community event with food, drink, and activities available for purchase. Limited free parking is available throughout Downtown Concord or take BART to the Concord station and walk four blocks to the event. The beer tent will be the meeting point for craft brew fans with German-style lagers from 20 breweries near and far. Presented by The Brewing Network, Visit Concord, and the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, Concord Oktoberfest will take place over two sessions on Friday, October 12th, from 6pm-9pm and Saturday, October 13th, from noon-6pm. The event is free but if you want to enter the beer garden, you must be 21 and over.

Visit Concord and the Concord Chamber of Commerce were looking to develop one more event for Todos Santos Park. They approached Justin Crossley of the Brewing Network and promoter of the Concord Spring Brews Festival, a perennial highly successful event. After considerable brainstorming, they agreed that a traditional Oktoberfest would be a great addition to the events lineup and provide more of a community event than the Brews Fest.



The kids’ area will include rides, animals, petting zoo, and games. It is being organized by Jay Bedecarre who produces the annual Kidsfest. Two bands including a 20-piece German orchestra will provide live music throughout the two days. Justin expects 10-15 food vendors and food trucks serving primarily traditional Bavarian foods. Salvio, Mt. Diablo, and Grant Streets will be closed to expand the area for the event.

Admission tickets for the beer garden are available for purchase online. \$25 gets you a commemorative stein and two half-litre pours. Additional drink tickets are available for purchase. Proceeds from the event will benefit Bike Concord. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit ConcordOktoberfest.com.

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Views of the Valley

with Tillie Turner
Photos by Micah



Ballet Folklorica at Todos Santos was part of the highly successful Taco Fest. There was also Mexican wrestling Lucha Libre. About 3,000 people turned out for this first-time event in Concord.



Members of the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley will stock voter registration forms for the November election, at post offices, libraries, and other locations in Central and East Contra Costa County. More volunteers are needed in East Contra Costa. Contact info@lwvdv.org L to R: Top, Joan Lautenberger (Lafayette); Karen Dolder (Danville); Connie Chiba (Moraga); Sally Ericksen (Lafayette); Barbara Kuklewicz (Pleasant Hill); Lietta Wood (Clayton). Bottom, Elaine McClellan (Danville); Anne Granlund (Lafayette); Patti Bittenbender (Walnut Creek); Diane Bianchi (Orinda). Photo by Ashley Coates.



Martial arts demonstration at the Japanese American Club's 62 Annual Japanese Summer Festival August 11 and 12 in Concord.



Book giveaway behind Pleasant Hill Library.



Smores at Sundown event brought families to Heather Farms in Walnut Creek



Concord Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the City Council celebrated the long-awaited opening of Dunkin' Donuts on August 28. The Next Generation Concept store features a hot and cold beverage tap system, nitro beverages and, of course, donuts. Located at 4383 Clayton Road.

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

Fall Decorating with Pinecones and Branches

As summer comes to an end and Fall is quickly approaching, it's time to think about some FrugElegant Style Fall decorating. We like the notion of using nature in our Fall decorating ideas. Lucky for all of us, living in Northern



California, there is a great abundance of branches, pinecones and leaves to use in our home decor. Many have to go to stores to buy these items but for us, they are free from our yards, parks, and trails (where permitted). This is how we created a very natural and rustic chic front porch...



Using a small saw, it was easy for us to cut a few branches off the tree (Always take necessary precautions when using any cutting tools and follow manufacturer's guidelines and directions.) We then cut the branch into a few shorter pieces. This is

not as difficult as it might look. Position the cut branches into two large planters and top them off with some fresh cuttings and large pinecones. Tie some of the pinecones together like a garland using

fishing line and drape some pinecones to hang over the edge.

Another super easy idea is to put some fun Fall fillers in old lanterns. We reuse the same black metal lanterns you might remember from many other seasonal decor or home entertaining posts. Now, we changed it up with some simple cuttings and small pinecones. Tie a burlap bow to the handle, glue a small pinecone to the bow and bam, it looks like you bought it like that! We love to use battery operated, timer candles because you set them to turn on each night automatically. So simply and yet so elegant. Day or night, the porch looks awesome.



We hope the idea of using nature in your Fall home decor inspires you. Nature is almost always a perfect theme for outdoor and indoor home decorating.

Looking for more easy Fall decor ideas and recipes, come on over to the blog!

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

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Raspberry Cheesecake Layered Lush

Crust:

1 1/2 cups finely chopped pecans
1 cup flour (you can use GF flour also)
1/2 cup butter melted
Mix together and press into a 9x13 baking dish.
Bake at 350 for 15 mins.
Cool completely.

2nd layer:

8oz cream cheese (softened)
1 cup powdered sugar
1 cup Cool Whip, thawed
Beat the cream cheese and sugar together til smooth, fold in the Cool Whip, spread evenly over the crust. Refrigerate for 30-40 mins.

3rd layer:

2 boxes 3.4 oz cheesecake pudding mix
2 cups milk
1 cup heavy cream
2 pints of fresh raspberries
Whisk the pudding mix, cream and milk together, fold in the raspberries, layer on top of the cream cheese layer. Refrigerate for another 20 mins.

Topping:

1 pint raspberries
8oz of Cool Whip, thawed

Top the 3rd layer with the pint of raspberries, and smooth the remaining cool whip over the top. Refrigerate until serving.

Ahhhh, beautiful, sweet and tart raspberries, how we love thee so. I must admit that confusion exists for me when writing about raspberries. First of all, like strawberries, raspberries aren't really berries in the botanical sense. They are derived from a single flower with more than one ovary, making them an aggregate fruit. True berries are simple fruits stemming from one flower with one ovary and typically have several seeds.

Red raspberries contain strong antioxidants with more Vitamin C than oranges and fight against cancer, heart and circulatory disease and age-related decline. Archaeological evidence shows that cave dwellers ate raspberries. That's good enough for me. So, enjoy this dessert from a recipe perhaps passed down from my great-great-great cave-ma. It's a lighter-than-air raspberry jubilation!

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by David King

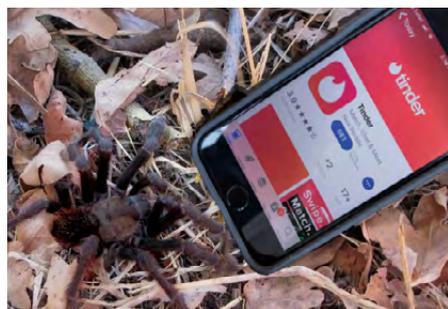


Mt. Diablo is easy to enjoy year round, but this is the season that is most entertaining. A couple of hours can make for an interesting hike during the annual tarantula mating season. With curious spectators coming in from all around the Bay Area, Mt. Diablo guided tours through October 14 are already sold out. So, for the locals, you will have to go it alone, if you are brave enough. Have some photo fun to commemorate your adventure.

Hollywood has given tarantulas a bad rap. Tarantulas are the giants of the spider world, well known due to their conspicuous size and common appearance in movies as evil forces. Because of that, many people flinch in horror at the sight of a tarantula. These big, beefy spiders strike fear in the hearts of arachnophobes everywhere, but in fact, tarantulas are some of the least aggressive and dangerous spiders around. California tarantulas are generally "gentle giants."

Tarantulas typically lead a pretty solitary, nocturnal life until mating season arrives which begins in late August. Our local male tarantulas mature in 8 to 10 years while the females can live 30 to 40 years. Mating season for the tarantulas native to Mount Diablo means that mature lust-filled male tarantulas are out and about, often on hiking trails, seeking female tarantu-

las to mate with. The sad part of this life cycle is once he finds his mate, he only has about 6 months to live.



Tarantula photographed in a compromising position of using Tinder to find a mate.

Tarantulas have a couple of defensive behaviors to protect them from predators who wish to eat them. They defend themselves by rubbing or flicking irritating hairs from their abdomen with their hind legs. If these get into any animals' eyes, noses or mouths, it will be enough to dissuade them from eating the spider and can even cause blindness. Tarantulas also have large fangs with venom and will bite when under attack.

Park rangers ask that you not pick up a tarantula. Although they can bite, injecting you with a mild toxin about the severity of a bee sting, the real

concern is that tarantulas are actually quite fragile. They come apart relatively easily and if a hiker turns suddenly squeamish and drops the tarantula, such a fall can be fatal. If a leg breaks off, not to worry, it will grow back once it molts.



Another reason - males carry their sperm on the outside of their bodies. They weave a "sperm web," where they keep their sperm until they find the lady tarantula of their dreams.

Mt. Diablo Tarantulas live in burrows underground. They will either use their fangs to dig them or else take

someone else's burrow-home. Even though they do not spin webs, Tarantulas use their silk to make doors or soft walls for their burrow.

Hiking for tarantulas is an experience you should take your family on at least once. The most common hike is through the Mitchel Canyon entrance and is about a 3-mile leisurely, but fascinating walk. Be sure to bring cameras for photo fun such as these. For more information about group hikes email onesuperhiker@aol.com.



More sights for photo fun: Giant spiders aren't the only thing to find while hiking, as this giant Mt. Diablo turtle threatens two children.

More Facts About Tarantulas

These ought to give you new respect these friendly creatures.

1. Tarantulas are quite docile and rarely bite people. While in most cases a bite is similar to a bee sting (except for an allergic reaction) to a person, tarantula bites can be lethal to birds and mammals as large as dogs.

2. Tarantulas defend themselves by throwing needle-like hairs at their attackers. If a tarantula feels threatened, it uses its hind legs to scrape barbed hairs from its abdomen and flick them in the direction of the threat. If they hit you, they cause a nasty, irritating rash. Some people may even suffer a serious allergic reaction as a result, especially if it comes in contact with their eyes.

3. Tarantulas come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. There are approximately 900 species of tarantulas in the world. Colorful tarantulas that can be kept by humans include the Mexican red knee, the Chilean rose, and,

most popularly right now, the pink-toed tarantula.

The largest tarantula known on earth is the goliath bird eater which is fairly fast growing and can reach a weight of 4 ounces and a leg span of 9 inches. The smallest is the endangered Spruce-Fir Moss Spider; its adults reach a maximum size about the size of a BB pellet.

5. Tarantulas ambush small prey at night. Smaller tarantulas eat insects, while some of the larger species will hunt frogs, mice, and even birds. Tarantulas paralyze their prey with venom, then use digestive enzymes to turn the meal into a soupy liquid.

7. Tarantulas have retractable claws on each leg, like cats. Though most tarantulas tend to stay on the ground, some species are arboreal and climb trees or other objects by extending special claws at the end of each leg for a better grip.

For this reason, it is best to avoid mesh tops for tarantula tanks, because the spider's claws can get caught in them.

8. Tarantulas don't spin webs, they use silk. Females use silk to decorate the interiors of their below-ground burrows, which is thought to strengthen the earthen walls. Males weave a silken mat on which to lay their sperm. Females encase their eggs in a silken cocoon. Tarantulas also use silk trap lines near their burrows to alert them to potential prey, or to the approach of predators.

9. Most tarantulas wander during the summer months. Sexually mature males find a burrowing female, he'll tap the ground with his legs, politely announcing his presence. This suitor is a good source of much-needed protein to the female, and in some species, she may try to eat him once he's presented her with his sperm.

10. Tarantulas can regenerate lost legs. Because tarantulas molt throughout their lives, replacing their exoskeletons as they grow. Should a tarantula lose a leg, a new one will reappear as if by magic the next time it molts.

M	A	G	N	U	M	P	I	M	A	R	Y
O	A	X	F	T	U	B	E	O	L	Y	V
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TV	ODD COUPLE	MORK
SHOW	MUPPETS	
LOVE	MASH	
BOAT	SOAP	
HAPPY DAYS	MARY	
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bookends
by Fran Cain

Sill Hedgecock's
Rhino in the Room

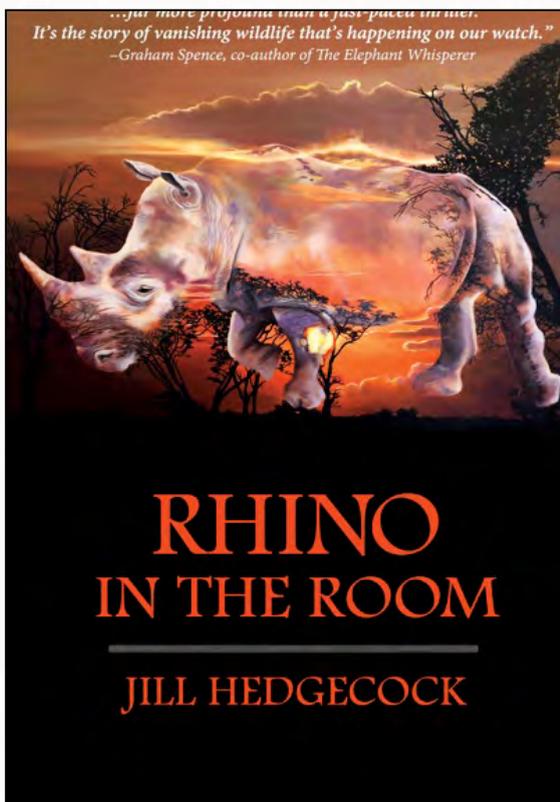
Rhino in the Room by Jill Hedgecock (2018, Goshawk Press, paperback, 307 pages, \$11.99) is part safari guide and part eye-opener about the illegal hunting, or poaching, of endangered rhinos. Most of all it's a coming of age story. Hedgecock's debut novel introduces 17-year-old Claire who has just discovered a stunning secret between her parents. Then she innocently walks in on Dad with a woman who is not her mother, and Claire's world is forever shattered.

Claire's apologetic father hopes to heal his relationship with his daughter by taking her on an African safari. Claire reluctantly agrees to accompany Dad despite her anger at him. She also fears contracting malaria in Africa after witnessing her best friend's chronic illness from the disease. Claire doubles up on her dosage of the anti-malaria drug Malarone, believing it will provide added protection, but it only causes nearly debilitating side effects.

Claire finds she cannot hide the disgust and resentment she feels towards her unfaithful father, causing the others in their safari group to feel uncomfortable. Junior, the young, well-muscled guide, "like a Disney movie prince" is assigned to Dad and Claire in an attempt to stop them from their bickering. Junior brings out Claire's charming side as she checks out his cerulean blue eyes, blond hair and that Australian-sounding accent. The admiration is reciprocated, sparking a new type of tension for Claire.

Despite her father's insistence that she pursue the sciences, Claire dreams of being a fashion designer. She begins to fully appreciate the safari only after she finds wonder and inspiration all around her in the wildlife colors and patterns of Africa. On the sly, she captures them in her sketchbook while her father is distracted taking photos of birds.

After a grisly and disturbing discovery in the bush, the guides decide to surprise the tourists by treating them to a once-in-a-lifetime sight: a pregnant black



rhino and its mate, possibly the last of their kind. On the way, Claire smells smoke. Poachers, intent on killing the rhinos and harvesting their horns, have set fires coordinated to drive the animals into an ambush. The poachers shoot at the unwitting tourists, and the terrified and Malarone-addled Claire forgets the safari golden rule: Don't run. Claire and her father battle fire, poachers and wild animals in escalating life-or-death situations requiring decision-making by a young woman who is in way over her head. The suspenseful climax leads to the healing of emotional scars and a new future for Claire.

A regular contributor to The Diablo Gazette, the Bay Area's Jill Hedgecock is a writer to watch. She is passionate about dogs, wildlife, and rhino preservation. Her award-winning essays and publications are often based on her travels. Jill uses this novel, inspired by her own African safari, to raise awareness about the very real threat to rhinos. Superstitious use of rhino horn as medicine drives the ruthless slaughter of these animals. Jill returns to bookends next month. Contact her at jillhedgecock.com.

movie review

by Tara McNamara, Common Sense Media



CRAZY RICH ASIANS

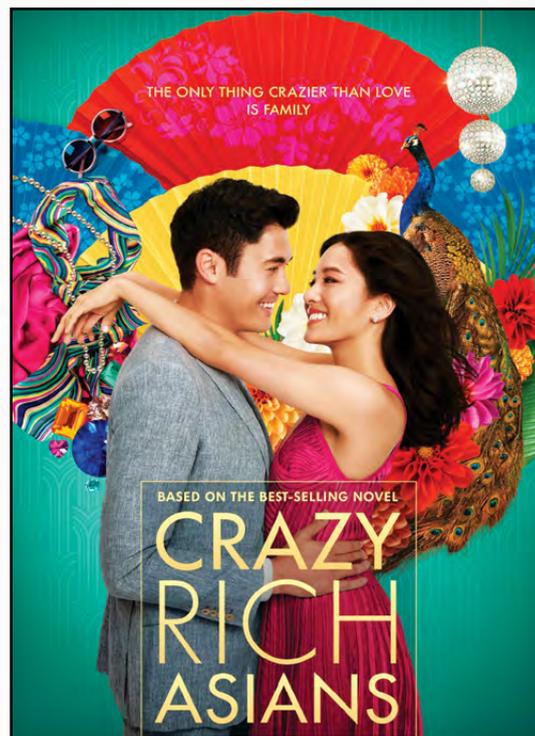
5 STARS

Based on Kevin Kwan's

best-selling novel, "Crazy Rich Asians" is the story of Chinese American economics professor Rachel Chu (Constance Wu), who travels to Singapore to attend a wedding with her boyfriend, Nick Young (Henry Golding). Rachel will be meeting Nick's family for the first time, and it turns out she's woefully unprepared. She has no idea that not only are the Youngs wealthy, but they're a prestigious "old money" family, and Nick is essentially the prince of Singapore. Rachel has to quickly adapt to Chinese culture, jealous ex-girlfriends, and Nick's controlling mother (Michelle Yeoh), who believes her son must marry a woman with stature. If Rachel can't handle things, she risks losing the love of her life.

This movie will make you fall in love with romantic comedies again. It's not so much that "Crazy Rich Asians" storyline is original as it is well done; it rarely goes for the cliché. Romcoms (romantic comedies) tend to portray their heroines as somewhat bumbling, not quite having their act together. But that's not Rachel Chu: She's capable, clever, and in control. She may be temporarily thrown off by the unfriendlies in Nick's life, but she never loses her footing. She's a well-drawn, down-to-earth character who isn't so much relatable as aspirational, and Wu plays her to a tee. The other women in the cast are great, too. Yeoh adds depth to the icy mother who sees Rachel as a threat to her family. And as Nick's glamorous cousin Astrid, Gemma Chan gives a meaty performance as her character deals with the complexities of a marriage in which the wife is rich and the husband is not in a traditional male-driven society. But it's rapper Awkwafina who runs away with the show, inspiring peals of laughter as Rachel's college buddy, Goh Peik Lin, who speaks with a Miley Cyrus-type cadence, attitude, and delivery. Every scene with her in it is 10 times funnier, and when Ken Jeong is added to the mix as her father, the duo make a comic combination that leaps off the screen.

It's impossible not to notice the movie's lingering shots of men's bare



chest, but this reverse objectification is subversively intentional: Asian men are rarely portrayed as sexy or appealing in the media, and the drooling cinematography is intended to challenge the idea that Asian men are undesirable. And amid all the humor and attempts to overthrow the anti-Asian bias in Hollywood movies, director Jon M. Chu also delivers a lovely love story. "Crazy Rich Asians" will end up on the Best Romantic Comedies in History list because it's actually not about getting the guy; Rachel proves that the greatest love of all is loving yourself (and your mama!).

Parents: Expect to hear some strong language (including "s--t," "t-ts," and more) and see drinking during many party scenes; cocaine use is also briefly implied. Couples kiss, and sex is suggested but not shown; one actress is rumored to be a porn star, and men make snide comments about women's cosmetic surgery and physical appearance.

Common Sense Media is an independent nonprofit organization offering unbiased ratings and trusted advice to help families make smart media and technology choices. www.commonsensemedia.org

Readers Rants & Raves

"I especially love the coupons, as an advertiser it makes people read the whole magazine. Getting better and better."

~Terrylynn Fisher, Realtor, Concord

"The infamous Rich Eber has a well-written review ...of the new Brazilian restaurant in Concord. I was stuffed before the meat began to arrive..."

~George F., Concord

"Isn't the Diablo Gazette free? I went to pick up a copy at a 7-11 on Oak Grove Rd. and there was a price tag on the shelf of \$2.99!"

~Tina T., Pleasant Hill

DG: The shelf price tag was left over from a prior product in that spot. It has been removed. You would not have been charged. The Diablo Gazette is Free. (Not that \$3 is unreasonable)

"Nice article about the Bart land grab. Your article piqued my interest, so now I know I am in District 2. Do we currently have a council person?"

~John M., Concord

DG: Carlyn Obringer is your District 2 councilmember.

"Thanks so much. Our friends and family are enjoying reading the article ("Pickleball Success!", Diablo Gazette August 2018)"

~Katrina B., Vallejo

"We sat around the dinner table and read 'Tales from the Trail: Desolation Wilderness'. What a great article. We look forward to his next tale"

~Sean P., Concord

Do YOU have something to say? Email: diablogazette@gmail.com

BRICKS & MINIFIGS

Risk to Help Son with Autism Pays Off

Anyone who has ever held a garage sale knows one of the most popular items buyers are looking for are Legos. This interest in the secondary market has led to a robust aftermarket retail business called Bricks and Minifigs.

Bricks and Minifigs in Concord was a franchise purchased by Bob and Patty Flynn to help pave a future for their son Scott. Scott has been diagnosed with Autism. At 22, Scott aged out of the educational system at Acalanes School district Del Valle Education Center. "Scott's biggest challenge, as is common with autism is with communication and social skills," Bob explained. Bob knew two years prior that the day would come when Scott would be on his own.

"We knew we were getting to a point where we needed to figure out something. Bob retired from the software business when Scott was 20. This gave him the chance to do research to tackle Scott's challenge. Then while Scott was visiting with his aunt in the Portland, Oregon area, she and Scott discovered a Bricks and Minifigs store there.

"Certain things bring Scott's energy level up and Lego is one of those things," Bob stated. That was the inspiration for Bob to look into a Bricks and Minifigs franchise. We decided to purchase the franchise so the he could have a place for him to work. When we told Scott of our idea, he replied, "It was a dream come true."

Scott has this extraordinary memory of great detail. He likes the minifigs, where he works scenarios and stories that aids in him knowing phenomenal detail about each piece. He's way ahead of anyone else at the store in that area.

"We had no retail background. My wife raised my boys and I came out of the corporate world," Bob said. "The whole purpose was to employ Scott, and get him a place to work, thrive and grow and have reliable employment.

Bob had a three phase plan. Get the store up and get Scott working. Have Scott working when his parents weren't in the store so he could get used to having a job without the parents there. And the third phase was to then sell the store and have him continue to work there as a part of that transaction.

Scott aged out of the school system at the end of 2016, and we opened our store in Concord in April of 2017.

Within a year, along came Jason Messer. Jason was ending his 26 years as a teacher and principal, with the last 10 years as Superintendent in Manteca district. He had decided to leave the educational system to have his own business. His goal was to open a Bricks and Minifigs store in Manteca on November 1 of this year. His research into the franchise led him to the closest franchisee near him. That was in Concord.

That is how Jason and Bob met. Unlike Scott, Jason's experience with Legos has only been in the last few years when he began using Legos to relax. "We were too poor to buy Legos when I was growing up, but I would occasionally play with them at a friend's house."

Once Jason and Bob met and Jason told Bob of his plan to open a store in Manteca, Bob revealed his plan to someday sell his store. The Concord store is a well ran store with highly talented

employees. Bob had explained why he purchased Bricks and Minifigs and how Scott was thriving and rapidly growing. Jason admired the idea of hiring special needs to work in the store.



While most people would take hours of research, Scott has instantaneous knowledge of all things Legos. Jason was impressed. He hires a second autistic boy that works three days a week.

So, Jason was fully on board with the terms of the sale. Scott gets to keep his job. Scott's primary role is largely in the back organizing pieces, creating matched sets. He can identify pieces and without much research know which piece goes to "It would take me two years to learn all those pieces, Scott can do it instanta-

Pyman Landscape Exhibit at Main Street Arts



Wenda Pyman will be exhibiting her landscape images in a solo show at Main Street Arts, "Intercepting Light" from September 5th to the 31st. Pyman has a wonderful eye and compositional sense, which, according to one viewer is "engaging and enlivening, in part, because her work is never symmetrical or static. Pyman's images display subtle mastery of tones, which are varied and harmonious."

Pyman says that for her, photography is a means of self-expression, but also, she seeks to convey a sense of place for the viewer. She wants the viewer to be transported into the scene and experience that awe and oneness with nature that speaks to her.

Pyman is a long-time member of the Moraga Art Gallery in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, Moraga. Currently, she is displaying there, as well as several selected venues. Drop in at the gallery, or you can visit her website: <http://wenda-pyman.photoshelter.com>.

Her images have appeared nationwide on cards, calendars, music CD album covers and magazines. Her fine art prints grace the walls of art lovers and photography collectors. She can be found at the Moraga Art Gallery. She belongs to several art alliances: EBAG, LAA and OAA, and ArtSpan. She participates in solo exhibits & group shows. Samples of her artistic style can be seen at: www.wendapyman.com. Her fine art prints and stock photos can be found at: <http://wendapyman.photoshelter.com>.



A chocolate and wine reception will be held on September 8th from 3 to 5 pm for Wenda, featuring chocolatier, Thomas



Mallot. Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street in Martinez. It is open 11-5 pm, Wednesday through Saturday; 10am-2pm on Sundays. www.mainstreetarts.net

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neously. He brings a huge value to the store.", Jason said.

Jason took ownership of the Bricks and Minifigs store in Concord on September 1. All the employees were invited to stay on including retired US Air Force medical administrator Charles Thompson, who's Lego knowledge is on par with Scott's.

Jason's plans are to keep running with birthday parties, which have been a big part of the business. "Birthday parties have been the biggest positive. Last December they did 28 parties, mostly on the weekends." J

The biggest challenge is the store's location at 2250 Commerce Ave.

Jason's future is to continue what Bob and Scott have built: offer more

hosted events, expand on the camps, and bring in the My Own Creations (MOC.) exhibits.

Bricks and Minifigs is all things Legos. They buy and resell complete kits and loose parts. Customers come in throughout the day looking for that missing set or odds and ends pieces.

When buying pieces, the store pays 30% cash of what they think the resale price will be and the rest of any payment will be in store credit.



Former and New owners Bob Flynn and Jason Messer



computercorner

by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

PAY UP OR START OVER

We have trouble right here in River City. The world of computer hacking has hit our towns and cities right here in Contra Costa County.

How you handle this treachery is up to you, pay the ransom or start over. Just think about starting over, how long will you or your business suffer with your computers out of action?

One of our long time mid-sized business customers in Contra Costa was just hacked and his data was encrypted by the hacker. A demand for ransom was made for over \$19,000.00. His business depends on customer data, forms developed over periods of years, contracts, court documents and the like, so he is likely to pay. Would you? Perhaps a better question would be, what would you pay to prevent the hacking in the first place?

Let me be clear. If you are hacked and your data is encrypted, you cannot get it back without the encryption key. The encryption key is a unique password that will unlock your data. There isn't a single product or procedure in the world that will circumvent the key, nor is there any professional or service that can recover the data.

Your choices are to start over with new servers, workstations, connect them to a new network, get all your software re-installed and begin the laborious process of re-creating your documents.

You could, pay the ransom and take your chances. Do you know how to buy a Bitcoin? You can't use a credit card. Give them a bank draft and now they know your account number and routing information. You can trust them, can't you?



I hate to say it, hacking happens because it is profitable to hackers and you are an easy target. Hacking has grown 8500% since last year. No laws exist to prevent it either. In a few minutes they break into your computer and scramble it with encryption. Payday comes in the form of Bitcoin the untraceable currency of the underworld. So, in less than five minutes they score \$1000.00 (average estimated PC hack ransom). Then they write computer programs that does the hacking for them, sit back and collect again because you're STILL not protected. the fact is you're an easy mark for another attack.

This is happening right now, right here in River City, Contra Costa County. Wake up, this not hype to sell you something worthless like a fry pan covered in magical coating. This is your life and it is getting harder to fight. Join us. Join our Army of good guys to fight this crime. We're talking less than ten bucks. Or, don't.

Aquarian Era Serving Up Positive Energy

"I've been loving nature all my life," says Melvin Thompson, owner of a new store in Concord called Aquarian Era New Age Shop. But in 2010, he was awoken to the healing properties of crystals. From that point Thompson claims his life had changed.

Since the year 2014, Aquarian Era has been providing top quality products in precious stones and Sound Vibration Therapy mostly at the Berkeley Flea Market. But on April of this year Aquarian Era New Age Shop found a home in Concord.

"We sell items ranging from handmade decor, fossils, statues, large and small precious stones, minerals, beads, sage bundles, incense, scented oils, seasonal items, decor accessories & much more. We create a welcoming environment. We want you to feel the energy. Our job is to inspire, enlighten, & educate consumers,"

says Thompson.

"Working with crystals is truly a passion of mine, It brings me such joy when I see the happiness in others after they come to learn about or buy crystals from me. I love being able to help others, educating them and also spiritually guiding them when needed."

Thompson says most of his stones are imported. He travels to the Tuscon Gem Show and from there finds his stones and crystals from Madagascar, Brazil, Morocco, India, and China.

"My favorite item in the store is the citrine cathedral. It's very unique and has calcite points sticking out of it."

The store is located 2803 Main Avenue, Suite A. It is open Tuesday through Sunday. You can learn more and view the store at their website at www.aquarianerastore.com.



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parentfootprint
by Dr. Dan Peters www.DrDanPeters.com

The Homework Wars

“Why do I need to do more work after I have been at school all day?”

“I never get any free time! I have school all day then homework when I get home!”

“Why do we have to do the same thing over and over when I already know it?”

Do these questions and pleas sound familiar?

I am guessing they do! Many parents don't remember having the amount of homework our children have today, and most do not remember homework starting in kindergarten! Homework has become a regular parenting topic in my practice, and a primary cause of family arguments and stress.

When it comes to homework, and grades for that matter, I advise my clients (and try to embrace this with my own kids as well) to focus on the big picture. Here are some things to think about:

- Ask yourself whose job the homework is – yours or your child's?
- Listen when your kids say it is boring and repetitive, as it may be
- Validate their frustration that they don't have enough free time
- Explore the idea that they have a choice whether or not to do their homework and help them understand the consequences of each

• Give them choice about whether they do homework directly after school or after down time

• Offer to help while being mindful not to micromanage

• Empower them to talk to their teacher if they have questions or concerns

• Talk to your child's teacher if you think they are spending more time than most, having considerable difficulty, or already have mastered the material

We often get caught up in the leaves and trees when it is often best to focus on the forest. Remember that your relationship with your child is more important than their GPA. Remember that you are trying to raise your child to ask questions, think about their choices, and make informed decisions. Also remember that schools and companies want creative thinkers who can communicate. Homework does teach responsibility and discipline – also important qualities for life success. In the end, try to keep perspective, pick your battles, stick to your overall parenting goal of raising children who are engaged in life and finally remember summer will be here soon.

Concord Police: It's About Customer Service

Concord Police Chief Guy Swanger took the stage on August 8 at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (Scholar-OLLI) at Cal State East Bay Concord campus to present the challenges of modern day “Community Policing” to a crowd of about 200 members.

Swanger emphasized that police work today is a young person's occupation. One of the most important skills that new cops need today is to be able to write very well, have empathy, and good communication skills. The profession became more militaristic after 9/11. Nearly 20 years later, there is a course correction leading back to way it was before 9/11. The day when new cops were the types who like to “mix it up” is over.

One of the major differences in police officers today is that most have college degrees. He likes to hire and work with Millennials stating, “They are not afraid to ask, ‘Why?’”, Swanger says. Swanger wants new cops to feel that it is their calling to be in the profession. He says that burglaries in Concord are the lowest in 50 years, attributing the NextDoor system and the proliferation of security cameras as reasons for the lower number. Only about 10% of a police officer's shift is going to involve fighting crime, the other 90% is involved with customer service.

“Today, (policing) is all about customer service. Delivery of our services when on site is everything,” Swanger noted. “It's even more important than response times.” So much so, that he brought trainers from the Disney Corporation to Concord to train his officers in customer service. “No one does that kind of training better than Disney.” Swanger said that a department knows when it has become a good one, when leaders from other cities want to come to see how things are being done in Concord.

Regarding homelessness, Swanger said that there are two basic groups of thought. One group simply does not want “the problem” to exist and deny the problem. They do not want to acknowledge that there are 100 homeless people sleeping next to Lowe's on Arnold Industrial Highway every night. He wants to force these folks to accept this issue as real.



Concord police attend the Taco Fest at Todos Santos Park. Photo: Concord Police Facebook.

The other group wants to enable the homeless by giving them money, food, etc. Given sufficient funds to do so, he would open a service center in Concord for the homeless during the day similar to the Trinity Center in Walnut Creek. “The homeless need a day center, a place to get a shower and services during the day. They also need storage facilities,” he said. “If you distribute suitcases with rollers, that can replace the shopping carts full of stuff, which is a disturbing sight to many.”

Swanger said that Concord Police have no relationship with ICE. However, they do have a good relationship with the Mexican Consulate, which can help with communications between Concord residents and their relatives in Mexico. He hopes that his department is viewed as having a good relationship with the Latino Community in Concord.

Swanger began his career in law enforcement in 1984, after graduating from college in the San Diego area and completing training at a police academy. He went to work for the San Diego Police Department, where he remained for 26 years. He took the job of Chief of Police in Concord in 2011.

Scholar-OLLI offers approximately 100 courses and lectures per year in subjects that range from the liberal arts to the natural sciences. OLLI at CSUEB's mission is to create a learning environment for mature learners that fosters creativity, self-discovery and peer education.

A Dishonorable Honor Society

by Kristy Buchholtz

As the parent of a newly minted college freshman, I can attest to how quickly college can sneak up on a family. One minute they're toddlers, then you blink, and you are moving them into their dorm room.

As college draws near, you face the reality of paying for it, and perhaps began to panic a bit. You research scholarships, awards, grants, and financial aid, anything that might help. Students are encouraged to study hard, participate in extracurricular activities, volunteer in the community, and look for ‘stand-out’ items to make their college applications shine.

Imagine receiving an official looking invitation to join an elite community of scholars, as one local Northgate HS student informed the Diablo Gazette, boasting the availability of scholarships, stating that the student has been recognized for their “superior academic achievement, outstanding leadership, and community commitment” by The National Society of High School Scholars. All this for a mere \$75 membership fee.

According to the NSHSS website, they have over 1.5 million members worldwide. Members must have a GPA of at least 3.5, or 1280 SAT, or one of 5 other requirements listed. The benefits of their membership include exclusive access to scholarships, events, recruitment fairs, resource discounts, and more! Should those benefits come at a cost? Don't high

school counselors provide that information free of charge? Should students have to pay a fee for access to scholarships?

Most parents are familiar with the similarly named National Honor Society. Founded in 1921, it has over one million members, stringent membership requirements, such as letters of recommendation from teachers, participation in ongoing volunteer projects, taking on leadership positions, and exhibiting outstanding character.

The NSHSS, by using such a similar name to NHS, has been accused of misleading students. According to a news report from Local 10 news in Miami, the Assistant VP for Undergrad Admissions at the University of Miami, Karen Long, has never heard of NSHSS. Long stated if an organization asks for money, that is a tip off that it is not on the “up and up”. The Better Business Bureau shows multiple complaints connected to NSHSS. A simple Google search returns many hits questioning the legitimacy of NSHSS, including Reddit articles, press releases, and negative reviews on Yelp, and Facebook. While NSHSS claims to have awarded multiple scholarships over their 16-year history, should students have to pay a fee to be considered? That's a question you need to ask yourself. Check it out, before sending in your hard-earned money, not everything is as it appears.

Nominate Humanitarians of the Year



In 2019, fifty-one years will have passed since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. That sobering reminder will serve as a backdrop for Contra Costa County's 41st annual commemoration of Dr. King's life and legacy.

On Tuesday, January 15, 2019, the Board of Supervisors will recognize a community member as well as a student leader whose dedication to others embodies the spirit and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The public is invited to join the community celebration and award ceremony at the county Board of Chambers. Mark your calendar.

Nominations are now open for candidate names to be submitted for both the adult and student humanitarians. The deadline to submit names for consideration is Thursday, November 1, 2018. Submit an adult and/or student whose accomplishments and service impact Contra Costa County, its residents and

communities, and reflect the spirit of Dr. King's work and achievements.

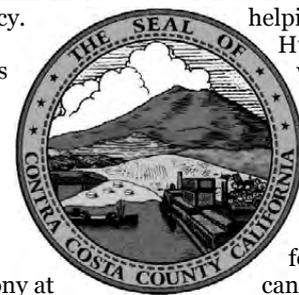
In January of this year, Phil Arnold was honored as the County's Humanitarian of the Year for a lifetime of work helping people in need. Student

Humanitarian of the Year went to Sienna Terry, then a Las Lomas High School senior, who already had a long list of accomplishments that follow in the path of Dr. King.

To submit nominations for an adult or student candidate, visit the County's website. To find out more about

past ceremonies and prior humanitarian winners, visit the Dr. King Ceremony website found in the “Community” section of Contra Costa County's website. <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/5307/Dr-Martin-Luther-King-Jr-Ceremony>.

Contra Costa County's Board of Chambers is located at 651 Pine Street in Martinez.



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aRt Cottage

by FROgard www.aRtCottage.info

25 Local Artists Present "Lovely Landscapes" Art Exhibit

Wow! There are 75 wonderful landscape pieces on exhibit for September at the aRt Cottage. You can choose from Big Sur, Mt. Diablo, Martinez Hills, Yosemite, Venice, San Francisco, and more. Twenty-five local artists are participating this month in our "LOVELY LANDSCAPES" exhibit. The pieces range in medium from collage, abstraction, watercolors, oil, mixed media, and more. There is something here for everyone. aRt Cottage invites the public to this FREE exhibit.

The artists reception and Open House will be on September 8 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Invite a friend to join you to meet the artists, admire some lovely landscapes, and enjoy the warm comfortable atmosphere along with wine, refreshments, live music and possibly take home your favorite masterpiece to enjoy for a lifetime. The show ends September 28.

The aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mt Diablo St, Concord. <http://artscottage.blogspot.com/>



theRIGHTmove

by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
www.BuyStageSell.com

You Have

Questions: I Have Answers

Question - Why do I need to do an open house? With such a busy market, it just doesn't seem necessary?
-- David B.

Answer – The listing Realtor's job is to market the home. That means their efforts are designed to put your home in front of the highest number of potential buyers. Sales is a numbers game, the more buyers your home is exposed to, the greater the potential you will receive offers. If there is more than one set of buyers interested, the potential for multiple offers increases as does the offer price and potentially final sales price. Open houses expose your home to the more potential buyers to find your home. A high percentage of buyers attending open houses have Realtors who are holding their homes or other homes open and not able to attend with them. Another large group of attendees at open houses are folks who are kicking tires and don't want to "bother" their Realtor just yet. It's a common thing that they find and fall in love with a home while out "kicking tires". Both groups are potential open house attendees who might not otherwise see your home.

Secondly, if another Realtor is holding an open house down the street and a buyer comes in but that is not the right home for them, what do you think happens? No amount of "selling" can make a buyer fall in love with a home if it is not right for them (i.e. bedrooms, décor, price and/or floor plan is not suitable for their needs). That agent is going to look for homes in the neighborhood to show them and your

potential for another showing increases. The agent representing a buyer has the goal of finding a match for that buyer and it could be your home.

Some sellers are not keen on the neighbors coming to see their home or they are just very private. However, at times, a neighbor is a source of a buyer finding your home in their neighborhood. This can be one of those compromise issues where the potential good outweighs other factors. Remember your home becomes the product that you want to market and sell for the highest possible price. The more buyers that see your home, the more Realtors that see your home who have buyers, the higher the chance you have of a higher sales price. It's not like a car you can park outside so buyers can just look through its windows. Most people still need to touch and feel the home they purchase.

Weighing all the pluses, you ultimately decide if you want an open house. In this market, you have a market time of a couple of weeks, where you are inconvenienced by open houses and Realtor showings. Your best move is to make your home available as much as possible and practical. This marketing exposure is money in your pocket.

Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate, Dudum Real Estate, is a 5-star Professional, Senior Real Estate specialist (for active seniors and boomers), Certified Staging Professional-realtor, and author for "Staging Standard", a magazine for stagers and their clients. 925-876-0966, info@BuyStageSell.com

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Why Age 7 is the Right Time to See an Orthodontist

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

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Journey-man's Journal
by Scott Freuer

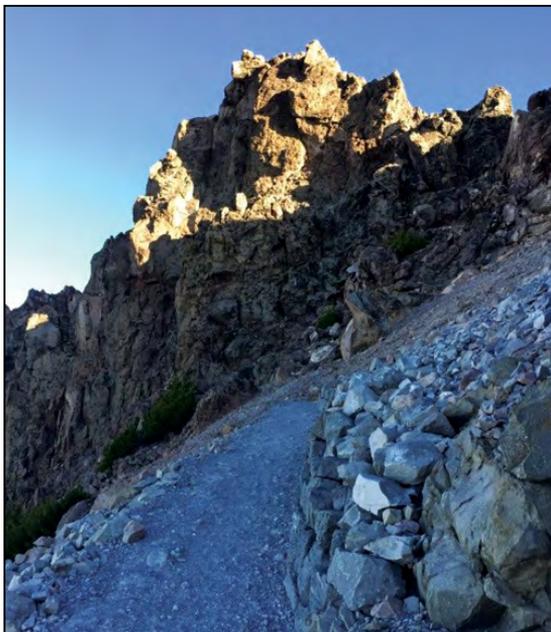
Tales From the Trail: Summiting Mount Lassen's Lava Dome

Mount Lassen is located within Lassen Volcanic National Park about 55 miles east of Redding. Just over a hundred years ago, a series of violent eruptions at the peak of Mount Lassen ejected rock and pumice 20 miles away and sent hot volcanic ash 30,000 feet into the sky. Fast moving slurries of pyroclastic volcanic material composed of extremely hot gases, rocks and debris mixed with melted snow raced down the mountain at astonishing speeds uprooting 100-foot tall trees and denuding hillsides with widespread devastation. Between 1914 and 1917 these multiple eruptions reshaped the Cascade Range's southern most active volcano to its present stature at 10,457 feet in elevation with the claim-to-fame of having the largest lava dome on Earth. It is accessible for all to explore being only a four-hour drive from San Francisco.

I have always been awestruck by Mother Nature's wrath and intriguingly I was only a few miles from this majestic volcano while on a family vacation. John Muir spent time exploring the beauty of the volcano's fumaroles, hot springs and mud pots. I recall reading one encounter where unforeseen bad weather of freezing rain and snow threatened his survival. As hypothermia set in, John Muir resorted to spending the night submerged in a hydrothermal hot spring covered in hot mud. I was captivated.

I decided to finally hike to the top of this active volcano. Even though I have never hiked above 10,000 feet in elevation before, after scoping out the topographic trail map, I was up for the challenge to test my own physical stamina and susceptibility to altitude sickness. I chatted up the daytrip with other family members hoping to rally a few of them to join me but to no avail. Although the hike to the summit and back to the trailhead was only 5.0 miles, the associated 2,000 feet of elevation gain would be formidable at the high altitude. My plan was to get an early start the next morning in order to be off the exposed peak before the afternoon thunderstorms and threatening lightning strikes.

I arrived at the Kohm Yah-mah-nee



The Steep Climb



Spectacular views at 10,457 feet atop the active volcano

Visitor Center at the southwest entrance gate. The smell of sulfur and rotten eggs permeated the steamy air as I drove past Sulphur Works and Fart Gulch, two of the more popular hydrothermal attractions.



Mount Lassen – The largest lava dome on Earth

The steep, winding two-lane road led me to the Lassen Peak trailhead parking lot at 8,500 feet in elevation. The morning air was brisk at about 20° F colder than at campsite. Aware that for every 1,000 feet in elevation gain, the temperature drops about 5°, I packed a few extra layers in my backpack as I gathered my gear. Dressed in running shorts, a long sleeve shirt, and trail running shoes I was anxious to get hiking and warm my extremities.

Even though it was summer, winter was still hanging around at this elevation.

Heavily packed snow socked the perimeter of the parking lot by the trailhead. It was looking possible that this hike might be out of my league, especially since I was alone, without experience in winter trekking nor the proper equipment of micro spikes and ice axes. Nevertheless, I decided I would keep to my goal to reach the summit or as far as safety permitted. I carefully skated about 50 feet of slippery snow before reaching solid ground where a snow-free band of dirt and loose scree stretched up the incline. The trail was entirely uphill endlessly switch-backing along the southern flank of Lassen Peak. The trail alternated between the rising glare of the sun to the east and the incredible views to the west. After about a mile of strenuous hiking, I reached Grandview Terrace at

approximately 9,300 feet elevation. I was already feeling the effects of thin air as I was spending an exceptional amount of energy with each step trying to oxygenate my lungs.

By no means was this a difficult or technically advanced ascent, but I was fairly exhausted while altitude sickness was looming. In its mildest form, acute mountain sickness (AMS), symptoms include headache, vomiting, feeling tired, and dizziness. However, AMS can progress to the more serious life-threatening high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE) which is characterized by

fluid build-up in the lungs, or high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE) associated with the swelling of the brain. Although my breathing was difficult, these were not my symptoms. I was fatigued merely by the fact that there was 30% less available oxygen at this altitude than at sea level.

The temperature continued to drop as I slowly traversed the remnant snow fields on the steep and precarious eastern slope. One misstep and I could slip and slide straight down the 1,000 foot chute to the rocky talus pile below. Once I reached solid trail, my attention centered on the breathtaking (literally) views. While still gasping for air, I ruminated on the beauty and newness of the earth below my feet that only a hundred years ago was

born from the depths of the Earth. I was above the timberline, so vegetation was non-existent at this altitude.

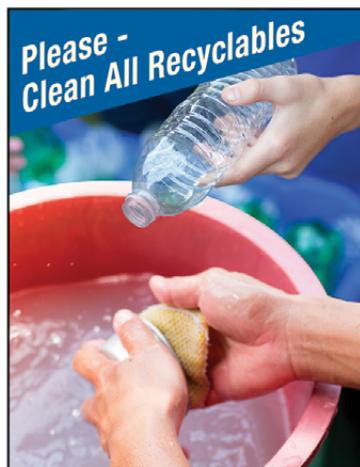
On my final push to the top, I battled strong winds and a steep rocky pitch. Finally, I reached the summit! Cheerfully, I unshouldered my backpack, sported a beanie and windbreaker, and relished the 360° views. Alone atop the largest lava dome on earth, I felt accomplished, relishing in the grandeur of the recent (geologically speaking) volcanic activity.

For years I yearned for an opportunity to set foot atop this peak and experience firsthand Mother Nature's mountain forming handiwork. I did it! I had unleashed the motivation to just get out there... and it felt good. Perhaps the next volcanic eruption will be in the following year or in another hundred, again reshaping the landscape to yet another scene, but my memories of this particular trek to the top will be with me forever.



Scott Freuer and the joy of accomplishment

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Holbrook Language Arts Academy Soaring

Holbrook Elementary closed in 2011 due to budget cuts, and re-emerged as Holbrook Language Academy in 2017 to be what Mount Diablo Unified School District calls a regional magnet school. That is quite the turn around attributed to sharp educational plan that hones in on the growing language diversity of the area.

Holbrook Language Academy offers a Dual Immersion program (English/Spanish) starting at Kindergarten and the rest of the students in grade levels 1st - 5th grade have exposure to Spanish and other languages as well. This is a new, innovative, and different kind of school.

The school offers one-to-one Chrome-books for each student. The most important part of being innovative is that our culture, talent, and academics align. Parents are seeing results; they are seeing their children starting to read in both English and Spanish. The dual language team arranges meetings and workshops for parents to understand the program and know how to support their children at home in learning a second language,



whether their second language is English or Spanish.

"Teachers are highly supported by the staff, counselor, and administration. Everyone works together to cultivate the school vision, and promote the love for bilingualism," Ariana Hernandez, Bilingual TOSA at Holbrook, shared with the Diablo Gazette.

CLAYCORD® NEWS & TALK

In case you missed it...

BART Receives \$6.8 Million for Safety and Security

BART is receiving around \$6.8 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to improve safety and security. Of the \$6.8 million, \$1.1 million will go toward sustaining the CAP team over the period of the grant, \$2 million will go toward radio communication systems, and \$3.6 million will be used to upgrade security cameras.

Pittsburg Seafood and Music Festival Announces Schedule, Sept. 8-9

The daily schedules for the 34th Annual Pittsburg Seafood and Music Festival have been released, with daily headliners including Sheila E. on Saturday, Sept. 8 and Caravanserai on Sunday, Sept. 9. An expected 30,000 patrons will enjoy music, entertainment, food, wine and beer, arts and craft, a full-size carnival, and jet ski races. For tickets, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/34th-annual-pittsburg-seafood-music-festival-2018-tickets-45302768801>.

Free Tuition Available for First-Time Community College Students in Contra Costa County

Free tuition for a year will be available to students in the Contra Costa Community College District starting today under a statewide initiative to fund free tuition at the state's community colleges. Students at Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College and Los Medanos College can receive the free tuition of \$46 per unit fee via the California College Promise initiative if they meet various requirements. They must be a first-time college student, have completed the district's Pledge Application, completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or the California Dream Act application, completed an education plan, be enrolled in and complete at least 12 units, and maintain a 2.0 GPA. Students will still be responsible for any books, supplies, materials and non-course fees required for a class.

Warriors Holding Auditions in Walnut Creek for New Senior Dance Team

The Golden State Warriors are holding auditions in Walnut Creek for a new "Senior Dance Team" consisting of anyone at least 55 years old who wants to perform at home games for the upcoming season. Auditions will be held on Sept. 8 at 10 a.m. at the Ultimate Fieldhouse at 2675 Mitchell Drive in Walnut Creek. The Senior Dance Team will help provide in-game entertainment at Warriors games at Oracle Arena in Oakland, joining the Warriors Dance Team, Golden State Breakers, and the Jr. Jam Squad, according to the team. People can pre-register for auditions at warriors.com/danceteam.

The Jr. Jam Squad, the Warriors' youth dance team of children ages 6-14 years old, will hold auditions also on Sept. 8 at 2:30 p.m. at the Ultimate Fieldhouse in Walnut Creek.

10 Local Organizations Join Forces to Help End Unemployment

Even though the Bay Area job market may feel red-hot, nearly 16,000 Contra Costa residents remain unemployed and are looking for work. To help these individuals find a job, ten organizations have partnered with Contra Costa County and its Workforce Development Board (WDBCCC) to create a network of service providers.

The effort, called the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative (CCWC), will be coordinated by Rubicon Programs, a nonprofit that works to end poverty in the East Bay, as well as the following CBOs and educational institutions:

Mt. Diablo Adult Education (MDUSD), Liberty Adult Education (LUHSD), Martinez Adult Education (MUSD), Pittsburg Adult Education (PUSD), Contra Costa Community College District, Lao Family Community Development, New Horizons, Opportunity Junction, San Pablo EDC.

"Before this collaborative, individuals looking for a job would often have to travel across the county to access services," says Jane Fischberg, President and CEO of Rubicon Programs, the CCWC's lead agency. "Now, each of our organizations will offer these resources on-site and within the community..."

The CCWC will offer intensive support services at an America's Job Center of California (AJCC) in Concord. The other nine organizations will offer satellite services and specialized resources in offices located from San Pablo to Brentwood. Participants will be able to access one-on-one counseling, computers and

printers, job boards and workshops. Each of the ten members of the Contra Costa Workforce Collaborative now offer their new services to unemployed Contra Costa County residents.

New Executive Director at Clayton Valley Charter High School

Jim Scheible will serve as the school's new Executive Director at Clayton Valley High School.

"The Board was impressed with his passion for student success and the enthusiasm he will bring to lead our staff and school community," said Kristy Downs, CVCHS Board Chairperson.

The hiring of Scheible comes three months after the abrupt departure of former Executive Director David Linzey and at least one top level administrator, believed to be his wife, Eileen according to a statement issued by the Office of Education to Claycord.com.

Bobcat Visits Concord Home for Rest and Relaxation

"This past Monday at 10:30 in the morning, our daughter looked out the front study window and saw this lovely creature walk across our front lawn and into the shady, damp fallen leaves underneath a magnolia tree. It relaxed a long while not five feet from the steps up to our front door!"

She said the bobcat looked healthy and was behaving normally. Thanks to Antler for the photos.



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Saturday, September 8, 2018
Concord Senior Center
5:00pm-8:30pm

To purchase ticket(s) go to www.concordreg.org or visit <http://www.cityofconcord.org/hawaiianfusion/>
Call (925) 671-3320 for more information.

Purchase raffle tickets and win exciting and wonderful prizes.





Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

SPECIAL EDITION: RUBY

In January 2017, The Diablo Gazette ran an article on Rubydooby Do, a zipper-nose Doberman with 21,000 followers on Instagram. Ruby's popularity has since expanded even further, due in large part to her talented owner's photography skills. Concord resident, Charles Lindsay, was gracious enough to allow Ruby's picture and name to appear in the logo in October 2017 when she became the icon for Jill Hedgecock's dog rescue column, *Rubydooby Do to the Rescue*.

The articles have drawn attention to 10 hard-to-place dogs, 8 of which are now in forever homes. In lieu of spotlighting a "pawsitively special dawg" this month, the column pays special tribute to her owner, Charles Lindsay, Ruby, and the Doberman breed. I was curious as to what drew him to adopt a Doberman.

"Ruby is our second Doberman," Lindsay pointed out. "Our first Doberman, Killian, was adopted from my wife's co-worker. He was 10 months old. At the time, I was helping out a local animal rescue and decided we would take him in. We had never seen or been around a Doberman before and we fell in love with him and the breed instantly. He passed away at age 5 to DCM (dilated cardiomyopathy). We were devastated. We did some research and realized that the characteristic and traits of the Doberman are what we loved the most about him."

Following Kilian's passing, the Lindsay set out to find a Doberman pup.

"As we searched for Doberman pups,



and it's easy to see why Ruby's Instagram fan base has reached 61,500 followers. Between her regal appearance and Lindsay's photographic skills, Ruby's stunning long head, cropped erect ears, and mischievous brown eyes are perfectly-suited elements for majestic photos—not to mention her sleek reddish-copper coat and golden eyebrows that allow her to shine under the lens.

Ruby's sleek, muscular body is indicative of the Doberman pinscher breed. Although initially bred to be guard dogs, the breed also has been used as police and military dogs, rescue dogs, and therapy dogs. On the down side, Dobermans can be susceptible to Von Willebrand disease, a blood clotting disorder.



we were referred to a small breeder, Judal's Dobermans, in Novato. Ruby's mother at the time was not pregnant, but we were put on her list. Judal's is a small breeder and usually only breeds when she wants a new dog for the ring. Both of Ruby's parents were Grand Champion dogs."

Ruby was born with a zipper nose that distinguished her from the other pups.

"We love the red Dobermans. We had a choice between three females. I loved Ruby and her zipper from the get-go, but my family had eyes on her sister (Instagram.com/Coco_the_dobe). The day we did the final choosing, Ruby picked us. She was all over all of us and the rest of the family fell in love with her. There's no health risks associated with a zipper, it's just a cowlick on her nose. It's not very common, and can happen on their nose, back, chest and neck."

Ruby does seem to have star power

About 25% of purebreds are afflicted with this condition. However, most abnormal bleeding in Dobermans tends to be mild. A genetic test can be used to detect which dogs carry the gene.

If you are now smitten with the Doberman breed and have your heart set on a purebred, please consider adopting through norcaldobermanrescue.com which is located in the northern CA town of Willits. It is about a 2.5-hour drive north from Concord. Adopt-a-pet (www.adoptapet.com) may list purebred Dobermans closer to home too. Not ready to adopt? Then you can live vicariously through Charles Lindsay's photos (@lindsaycrew) or Ruby (rubydooby_do) on Instagram. Ruby also has a Facebook page ([Facebook.com/rubydoobydothedoberman](https://www.facebook.com/rubydoobydothedoberman)).

REPTILES continued from Page 4....

look, these animals were docile yet fascinating to watch. I asked Dan how long he had been interested in reptiles.

"When I was 7 years old, a kid sold me a dead tortoise for ten cents. He told me it was just hibernating. So, I called Lindsey Museum and they told me to soak it in warm water to wake it up. The whole experience of trying to jump start a tortoise was well worth the ten cents," Dan recalled. "That created my passion for reptiles and amphibians." Dan grew up in Concord playing in the creeks catching tadpoles, toads, and frogs. "I opened the store with a handful of reptiles, one being a large iguana that became a store fixture, a mascot."

At the time, Dan and his wife, Joyce, were bird owners. They had no idea how to run a business. All they had was a passion for animals and no choice but to succeed. Failure meant financial ruin. "We knew nothing about demographics, competition, target market, purchasing animals or budget," Dan says. "We just kept reinvesting in ourselves."

As an exotic store, they sold raccoons, crocodilians, exotic birds, rabbits, dogs, cats, reptiles and amphibians. "I could be seen around town on my motorcycle with my Sheltie dog's head poking out of my jacket and our raccoon on the seat behind me holding onto my waist (with a leash and harness, of course [and before laws prohibited owning one]). I would give out our business card to curious people at traffic lights!"



A male and a female Rhino Iguanas

But after two years, we went to just reptiles and amphibians. "The birds were too noisy and messy. We couldn't hear our customers on the phone. So, they were the first to go. Puppies sold well for a while, but when they didn't sell they would grow up and that became a problem. Then raccoons became illegal."

Today there are no other pet stores in Concord. The last recession almost caused him to close as well. "I was already clearing out the back room, but we survived by the grace of God and determination."

Hoffmann's Reptile has expanded to 1,700 square feet. When you walk in the door you can find everything you need to keep your herps healthy. Feeder insects, caging, lights and substrate are just for starters. If you are not sure what your new reptile will need, the Hoffmann's are more than happy to help.

"We have designed vivariums we call Reprite Cages, a wooden enclosure with glass front. It's designed to hold in the heat and humidity for the reptiles," Dan says. "We set up the cage for the individual pet. Set up includes all the equipment the animal needs. Just add the pet, take the enclosure home and plug it in. We offer cage cleaning for our cages, boarding and health checks. Our services go beyond your original purchase, for the life of the animal. We specialize in family-friendly reptiles. These are creatures with feelings and needs. They should be given the best



Dan Hoffmann seen in front of his shop choking on a yellow albino burmese python, or vice-versa

care and caging, not the cheapest you can get away with! The environment makes or breaks the animal."

The more popular sellers are the bearded dragons and ball pythons which are sold as hatchlings at 12" to 14". They grow up to 5 feet. Unlike the Burmese python, which can get up to 30 feet. You can still find exotic frogs, geckos, turtles, and pet rabbits there.

"We've been told we're better than going to the zoo!"

The business has changed over the years. The internet caused the store to change from primarily selling pets to selling food, feeder rodents and crickets. They sell over 10,000 crickets each week, which is down from a peak of 18,000 before the recession.

Running the business had its tribulations and its rewards for the Hoffmanns. Dan says he's had a few notable celebrities come into his store, such as Eddie Money, Tony La Russa, and Concord's Mr. Jacuzzi. "I mentored a lot of kids through the years. Two in particular, Brian and Chris Hansbrow worked for me for 10 years in the store. They started originally to pay for some turtle equipment. Eventually they moved to Utah and now run an online store called geckodaddy.com." Dan says they sell \$50,000 annually of exotic frogs and geckos, and that's not their job. They still work full time jobs. "We still stay in touch and visit. I regard them as my own kids."

Dan also mentored one kid, Doug, who now designs secret weapons for the military at Sandia National Laboratory, near Livermore. I can't imagine what that would be...perhaps, geckos with friggin' laser beams attached to their heads.



Editors Note: Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 62,000 followers. [Instagram.com/rubydooby__do](https://www.instagram.com/rubydooby_do). Column written by Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club, www.jillhedgecock.com.