



CONCORD TACO TRAIL

CONCORD PUTS ITS BEST FOOD FORWARD

pg. 3

Comedy Central "Workaholics" Actors/producers Kyle Newacheck (left) and Blake Anderson (right) with actor friend Teddy Spencer, all Clayton Valley High graduates, pose with Silvia Barajas inside Los Rancheros Taqueria

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Publisher's Notes

By David King

It has been a difficult couple of years for local restaurants. But kudos to Visit Concord for bringing back Concord's Taco Trail promotion to ignite our enthusiasm for eating out.

This brilliant effort to boost consumption encourages us to expand our dining horizons in search of the best Taco. With 40 locally owned restaurants competing, Concord has much to offer in South of the Border cuisine. And your participation will go a long way to helping Concord's restaurant economy.

Even more extraordinary in this effort is the support given by celebrity TV stars Blake Anderson, Kyle Newacheck, ("Workaholics") and actor Teddy Spencer.

All three former Clayton Valley classmates volunteered to make videos to help kickstart their hometown's taco showcase promotion.

Anderson drove up from Los Angeles to team up with Newacheck and Spencer. After a quick visit to Visit Concord's Visitor Center to pick up a Taco Trail map, they met up with videographer, Pat Mosca, Clayton, the former keyboardist for the Greg Kihn Band. Yes, the stars came out for Concord's Taco Trail.

Mosca hung out of a car window videotaping as the three trekked down Monument Blvd. on bikes each sporting "I heart Concord" T-shirts. Their day's Taco-eating video challenge was edited into an entertaining 5-minute Taco Trail promotional video, plus individual shorts featuring several different restaurants, and plenty of photo ops with restaurateurs and their employees. (See cover).

That was very classy of them. You men make Concord proud.

Classy TV Stars chip in to spark hometown recovery

Blake Anderson can currently be seen in the Hulu series "WOKE." Blake could also be seen in Netflix's "GAME OVER, MAN"

which he stars and produced alongside Adam Devine, Anders Holm, Scott Rudin, Seth Rogen, and Evan Goldberg. Blake also recurred as Mike Bean in the last season of the NBC hit "PARKS AND RECREATION."

Kyle Newacheck directed "MURDER MYSTERY" for Netflix, which starred Jennifer Aniston and Adam Sandler. "MURDER MYSTERY" was one of the biggest opening weekends for a film in Netflix's company history. Most recently, Kyle directed and produced five episodes of

the second season of "WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS" for FX and is currently in production on the show's third season. The show was nominated for multiple Emmy's including Outstanding Comedy Series.



Actor Teddy Spencer, Director/actor Kyle Newacheck and actor Blake Anderson made many stops along the Taco Trail.

In case you missed it...

Permanent ballot box at City Hall



Ballot Drop Box Location Graphic - 1950 Park Side Dr.

The City of Concord's official ballot box is open now for the current California Gubernatorial Recall Election. The permanent ballot box is at Concord City Hall, located in the parking lot of Civic Center, 1950 Parkside Drive. The City will not be accepting ballots inside City Hall facilities.

County Election staff collects ballots every day, and these secure boxes will remain open until 8 p.m. on September 14, 2021.

There are 40 official ballot boxes within Contra Costa County. To find other ballot locations, polling locations or more information on the recall election, visit Contra Costa County Elections.

If you prefer to mail your ballot, no postage is necessary. Just remember to sign and seal your ballot envelope before sending it off.

BART to receive \$331 million in Federal COVID-19 relief funding

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration announced that it is issuing a grant of nearly \$331 million to BART to help the transit agency recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$330.8 million grant is coming from the American Rescue Plan, according to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, and is intended to help BART maintain its staffing and service levels in future fiscal years, as the agency's ridership is expected to slowly return toward pre-pandemic levels by the end of the decade.

BART is also expected to receive federal funding from the infrastructure bills Congress is currently considering. The agency could potentially receive the funding it needs to complete its extension into downtown San Jose.

Contra Costa County taking nominations for Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Awards

Contra Costa County is seeking a few good humanitarians to commemorate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The county seeks nominations for a student and an adult humanitarian of the year.

The awards will be presented at the 44th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Ceremony on Jan. 18, 2022. This year's theme is "One People, One Nation, One Dream."

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors will recognize a community member and a student leader "whose dedication to others embodies the spirit and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

Nominees' accomplishments and actions must go above and beyond to positively impact Contra Costa County, its residents and communities. Organizers ask that nominees demonstrate leadership, commitment to the community, and personal integrity. Submissions can be made at the Contra Costa County Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony website. The deadline to nominate someone is Nov. 5.

Concord City Council selects Seeno and partners to negotiate Naval Weapons Station development

By Tony Hicks - The Concord City Council voted 3-2 on August 21 to exclusively negotiate with a group of developers, including Seeno Homes, to become master developer for the massive former Concord

Naval Weapons Station.

Seeno Companies, Discovery Builders Inc., Lewis Group of Companies, and California Capital Investment Group are the benefactors of Saturday's close vote.

Mayor Tim McCallian, Vice Mayor Dominic Aliano and council member Edi Birsan voted for the Seeno team. Council members Carlyn Obringer and Laura Hoffmeister threw their support behind the team of Sunset Development and Brookfield Properties. Sunset built and maintains interest in much of Bishop Ranch in San Ramon.

Having local developers with ties to local organized labor was key. Concord selected Lennar Five Point as master developer in 2016. The company pulled out of the project in March 2020 when its initial exclusive negotiating agreement expired and its negotiations with local labor unions failed.

The fate of 5,046 acres on the city's northeast side has been one of Concord's biggest issues since the Navy abandoned the area in 1999. The Navy officially designated it as surplus and made Concord the local reuse authority for the site, of which 2,300 acres are targeted for 13,000 units of housing and millions of square feet of commercial space.

The site will also be home to a new 2,540-acre East Bay Regional Park, named Thurgood Marshall Regional Park - Home of the Port Chicago 50, commemorating the nearby Port Chicago tragedy during World War II.

Martinez approves development on former Pine Meadow Golf Course

By Tony Hicks - After years of legal and political volleying, the Martinez City Council finally signed off on a developer's plan to build 65 homes on the former Pine Meadow Golf Course.

The golf course closed in April 2015 and almost immediately became a hot potato of competing interests.

DeNova Homes initially wanted to build 98 homes, a proposal opposed by community members wanting the 26.9 acre-property to remain open space. The site was the subject of competing two ballot proposals.

Concord-based DeNova will subdivide 71 lots, with six going toward a new park for the city - its first in 20 years, Council member Ross pointed out. The city will design the 8.22-acre park, with DeNova contributing \$1 million toward its completion. About \$150,000 of that amount would be in work, the rest in improvements identified by the city.

The Claycord Online Museum: The Dinosaur in Downtown Concord

Who remembers this giant dinosaur?



The dinosaur was placed on top of the old Keenan Heinz Company on East St. in Downtown Concord just a few years ago, but the company had to take it down after the City of Concord told them they didn't have the proper permits to put it on the roof.

If you have any old photos or items that you'd like to place in the Claycord Online Museum, just scan or take a photo of them, and send them to: news@claycord.com. It doesn't matter what it is, even if it's just an old photo of your house, a scan of an old advertisement or an artifact that you would like to share.

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Taco Trail Challenge is Back!

It's time to break out the stretchy pants

The Taco Trail Challenge returns September 15 through October 15, and there is even more to love this time with a new mobile passport, weekly giveaways, and another shot at claiming the Trail Champion title.

The Concord Taco Trail is a directory of the nearly 40 authentic, family-run restaurants and taquerias that make Concord the East Bay's go-to destination for great Mexican food, and it's all you need to explore some of the city's best hidden culinary gems. Most of the taquerias and restaurants offer cuisine made from authentic family recipes specific to different regions in Mexico. For example, Tortilleria El Molino and Mercado Del Sol both specialize in Michoacan style food such as carnitas and buche. Taqueria Autlan offers



Taco plate from Mercado Del Sol in Concord. Mercado Del Sol receives a 4.5-5 star consumer rating on most Online reviews.



Yucatan specialties like al pastor and cochinita pibil, and Jalisco-style restaurants like Salsa Mexican Grill and El Yahualica, create favorites such as birria, and beef or shrimp tacos. Gaudalajara Grill simply specializes in "California Mexican." Most of the eateries do offer a mix of regional styles along with their specialty dishes, and many of them also make their own tortillas on site.

During the Challenge, you will earn points towards prizes at each location you visit. The taco fan with the most points at the end will be crowned the new Trail Champion for 2021 and receive the official Taco Trophy --

along with some serious bragging rights. There's also a "Golden Taco" award for the taqueria with the most check-ins, so be sure to support your favorites. You can bet that last year's winners, Trail Champion Leyanne Amos and Favorite Taqueria, Los Portales, will be ready to defend their titles.

To participate, just sign up for the new Taco Trail mobile passport on the Visit Concord website. It's free and easy, and you can start racking up those delicious taco points right away. If you signed up for last year's Taco Trail passport, it has now expired. You will need to get



2020 Taco Challenge winner Leyanne Amos runner-up Emily Lawson. Amos won by visiting 32 locations.



the new one to participate this year. For more information, including the complete list of participating restaurants and the official Taco Trail map, go to <https://www.visitconcordca.com/eat-drink/taco-trail/>. Or you can pick up a printed map at the Concord Visitor Center at 2151 Salvio Street, Suite T, in Salvio Pacheco Square.

We are also excited to announce that Concord's own hometown celebrities Blake Anderson and Kyle Newacheck are now two of the Taco Trail's biggest fans. The Comedy Central "Workaholics" stars recently hit the trail with us and made a series of fun videos about it. Check them out on Visit Concord's YouTube and social media pages.

Visit Concord is offering a special Taco Trail "Stay & Play" package with any

hotel reservation during the promotion period, so invite some friends out to "do the Trail" and make a weekend of it. For information on hotel packages, visit <https://www.visitconcordca.com/hotels/specials-deals/stay-play-hotel-packages/>.

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

We look forward to seeing you on the Trail!

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www.VisitConcordCA.com/Eat-Drink/Taco-Trail



Bathroom Upgrades Worth Doing When Selling

Even though sellers have the upper hand in today's market, it does not mean that they can phone it in. While homes have been selling quickly in most locations, you will not get top dollar unless you make your home as attractive as possible. One area of your home that you should concentrate on is the bathroom.

Simple upgrades to your bathroom can make a substantial impact and affect how much your home sells for. These are the bathroom upgrades that are worth your time and investment when selling.

Update the vanity. Basically, the vanity is the command station in your bathroom, so it needs to be both functional and beautiful. Buyers are looking for luxury and sophistication so let that guide your choices. Opt for clean lines and high-quality finishes when possible. Choose sleek colors like gray or high-gloss white. While you are at it, replace the medicine cabinet for a more luxurious and pulled-together look. If you have a simple mirror over the vanity, consider framing it to add both luxury and value.

Install double sinks. If you are updating the vanity, consider installing double sinks. Most of today's buyers appreciate having double sinks, especially in a master bathroom. If you are concerned that you do not have the space for double sinks, you would be surprised at how little room they take. In the end, it is better to have two smaller sinks than one large one - particularly in homes with just one bathroom.

Upgrade your hardware and décor. One of the easiest ways to upgrade the look of your bathroom is to swap out hardware. Replace drawer pulls, doorknobs,

faucets, and towel bars and make sure it all matches. All the metals and finishes should be cohesive.

Get new lighting fixtures. Have the lighting fixtures in your bathroom been gathering dust over the years? Then it is time to replace them. Swap them out for something more streamlined and sophisticated, which will appeal to most buyers. You can do this without having to hire a professional electrician.

Invest in new flooring. If your floor is old, scuffed, or chipped, then it is time to install something new. Buyers are looking for ceramic or vinyl tile. These can typically be installed without the help of a professional, though you can hire one if the project seems too daunting.

Add storage. It seems like there is never enough space in any bathroom. Buyers will be looking at the storage options in a bathroom, so optimize your space. If you have the budget, you may want to consider adding square footage to your bathroom from a neighboring room or closet. A few square feet can make a significant difference.

Bring in more light. No one likes a dark and dingy bathroom. Buyers want clean, bright, and light bathroom spaces. Choose neutral colors for your bathroom that will reflect light, especially if your bathroom does not have a window. There is a reason white is the most common color in bathrooms - not only is it clean and bright, but it gives the illusion of more space.

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legalbriefs
by Douglas A. Prutton, Attorney
Personal Injury Labor & Employment Law
email: Doug@PruttonLaw.com

Thud: Your Handyman Just Fell From Your Roof!

Harry Homeowner enters my office with a smile and a handshake, but with worry in his eyes. He hands me a letter from another attorney which reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Homeowner:

I represent Jose Gonzalez who, as you know, was seriously injured when he fell from your roof while attempting to clean your skylight. My investigation reveals that your roof was dangerous in several ways. First, you erected a short parapet wall only 20 inches from the edge of the roof. Mr. Gonzalez fell while walking in this gap – he could not clean the skylight from the other side of the wall because there were air conditioning ducts blocking this area. Second, there were loose stones and pebbles making the gap slippery. Third, there were no tie-off points on the roof for safety harnesses. Fourth, there was no guardrail or safety wall along the edge of the roof.

We will be holding you responsible for Mr. Gonzalez' injuries. I will be in contact with you after Mr. Morales completes his treatments and has recovered.

Respectfully yours,

Thadeus Montgomery, Esq.

"What do you think," Harry asks me, "am I screwed?"

Harry is going to like my answer. "Harry," I respond, "I think everything should work out fine. In California it is very difficult for an independent contractor working on someone's home to make a claim against the homeowner for injuries sustained by the contractor or the contractor's employee. The idea is that when a homeowner hires someone to perform work the homeowner delegates all responsibility to the contractor for workplace safety. The contractor supposedly is the expert and can buy worker's compensation insurance to cover injuries."

I continue explaining to Harry. "The courts have recognized two situations where a homeowner can be responsible for injuries sustained by a contractor (or its employees). The first situation involves a homeowner who retains control over a part of the contractor's work and negligently exercises that control in a manner that affirmatively contributes to the injury. In that case the homeowner can be held responsible. In your case, you did not exercise control over any part of Jose's work so he and his attorney cannot rely on this exception.

The second situation involves concealed or hidden dangers. If the homeowner knew (or should have known) of a concealed or hidden danger, and the contractor did not know of that danger (and could not have reasonably discovered the danger) and the homeowner did not warn the contractor of the danger, the homeowner can be held responsible. In your case though, Harry, there was no concealed or hidden danger. The dangers Jose's attorney describes in the letter were all open and obvious and known to Jose.

What Jose's attorney is trying to do is to suggest a third exception to the general



rule that homeowners are not liable for injuries to contractors. The attorney is arguing that homeowners should be held liable for open and obvious hazards where there are no safety precautions that can be taken to avoid the hazards. The argument is that although homeowners delegate workplace safety to contractors, and therefore that contractors, not homeowners, are obligated to take all safety precautions, where there are no safety precautions that can be taken the homeowner should be held responsible for creating the hazards in the first place."

This third exception (and the facts of Harry Homeowner's case) were very recently considered by the California Supreme Court in a case entitled Gonzalez v. Mathis (decided August 19, 2021). The Court rejected the argument that there is a third exception for situations involving open and obvious dangers that cannot be avoided. In such cases, the homeowner, even though he may have negligently created the danger, cannot be held responsible.

Two other points are worth mentioning about Harry's case. First, Harry's homeowner's insurance would need to be notified about the case – the insurance company would most likely deny Mr. Gonzalez' claim based on what I discussed above, and if a lawsuit was filed would provide attorneys to defend Harry. Second, although typically courts do not make laws, rather they interpret laws passed by legislatures, the laws discussed above about homeowner liability for injuries sustained by contractors are all court-made laws pursuant to the "common law" that we inherited from England (but that is a subject for another article!).

What are the lessons to be learned? (1) Avoid retaining control over any part of a contractor's work (and if you do, do it carefully). (2) If you are aware of any hazards or dangers that a contractor may encounter on your property, warn the contractor and its employees (preferably in writing or in a text or email); and (3) make sure the contractor carries worker's compensation insurance to cover injuries to its employees.



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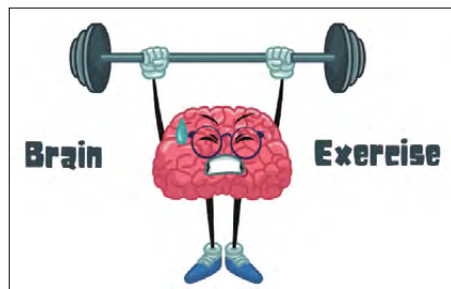
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Yes! You Can Improve Your Brain Health

By Dr. James Mittelberger

Contrary to some old teaching, our brain cells do grow and are constantly changing throughout our lives. We can improve our brain health by getting plenty of sleep, exercising, challenging our brain, keeping the circulation flowing, and controlling blood pressure. Numerous studies have shown these behaviors can stave off brain decay that can lead to dementia and other brain diseases. It is never too early or late to improve your brain health.

While genetics play a big role in brain disease, we actually have a great deal of control. In fact, what people do in youth and middle age can prevent brain disease later in life. There is a dual benefit - feeling better now and far into the future.



Use It or Lose It

Challenging your brain is the number one thing you can do to develop new brain cells and nerve plasticity. Nerve pathways are flexible or plastic and can grow new connections if challenged. Active brain cells light up with flowing electricity. More electricity equals more brain health. Studies all over the world prove that education is one of the most important protectors against dementia.

But sitting at the table and idly doing a crossword puzzle will not do it. That is not enough of a challenge. Rather pushing to learn a new skill is what gives your brain the challenge it needs, whether its woodworking or crochet. You could try something artistic such as painting, writing, drawing or knitting. You could learn cooking, pottery, or anything creative that inspires you. You could challenge yourself with a computer app, a game or a new language. One is never too old to learn. There are all kinds of learning opportunities and resources around us. Check out a YouTube instructional video or take a hands-on class offered by your city. The important thing is to do something difficult that challenges your brain to grow.

Exercise Your Brain and Your Body

Getting exercise is very good for brain health. It is probably the best single challenge to choose. Exercise requires a great deal of brain activity. Studies show it electrifies and lights up multiple parts of the brain. The motor cortex lights up and coordination neurons are firing as you move your body to balance, move, and contract muscles.

With the electricity comes blood flow. Blood flows through brain just as it flows through muscles. With activity, blood flow and metabolism are stimulated. Exercise keeps the arteries open. Body and brain blood pressures are better regulated. You can feel exercise benefiting both your body and your brain. You feel alive all over.

The good news is that you do not have to be an ultra-marathon runner to gain these benefits. In fact, recreational tennis players are the longest lived. An hour a day will do it. You could challenge your brain

and your body at the same time by learning a new sport or activity. Start kayaking or swimming. Learn pickle ball or join a recreational league basketball or volleyball team. In our area, many recreation opportunities abound.

Sleep Does More than Rest the Body

Sleep is a highly active brain process. Sleeping for 7.5 to 9 hours per night is ideal to keep your brain optimal now and in the future. Give your brain the time it needs to clean up waste products and reduce inflammation. Studies show that accumulated brain waste products lead to dementia. It is during sleep when the brain takes out the trash, so to speak. Recent studies show that enough sleep during middle age is associated with less dementia decades later.

However, if you are doing all the sleep hygiene basics (regular schedule, dark room, bright morning light, etc.) to get 7.5 hours or more sleep and finding yourself tired and sleepy consistently, stop caffeine after noon and stop alcohol. Also consider seeing a doctor or sleep specialist. There may be something medically wrong. Good sleep is vital.

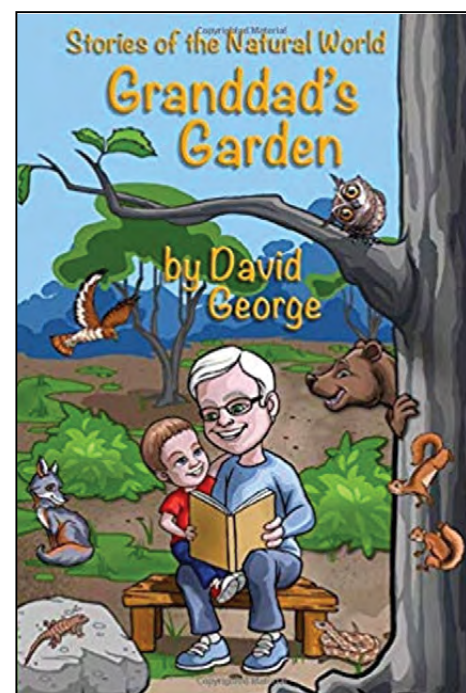
Vitality Equals Longevity

Think about the seniors in your life or maybe yourself. Are they engaged? Are you vibrant? Are you giving every day your whole attention? The best way to have the best long life possible is to dedicate yourself and be engrossed with life. There are few 90-year-olds and almost no 100-year-olds who spent decades just sitting in their rocking chairs. The people who live the longest, greatest lives with great health are fully engaged now with everything they

have. Stories and studies of people who live to 100 show us the best survival techniques are to live fully throughout your life. Get exercise, challenge yourself, sleep well and embrace every day.

Doing all of this now pays off huge benefits now and in the future. This is all truly a "no-brainer!"

James Mittelberger, MD, MPH, is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCSF School of Medicine and is board certified in Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, and Hospice & Palliative Medicine.



"Granddad's Garden: Stories of the Natural World" by Naked Gardener columnist David George. Amazon.com.



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by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

Parts shortages persist

Perhaps you have heard there is a global “chip” shortage for everything from cars to computers caused by a slowdown in production because of Covid. A few weeks ago, the shortage looked like it may be getting better, but then another blow as a major China port closes. When will it end and what are the ramifications today?

To add to the confusion another China port has shut down, according to cnbc.com, “China has shut down a key terminal at its Ningbo-Zhoushan port, the third busiest port in the world, after one worker was found to be infected by Covid; a move that will likely put further pressure on already stretched supply networks. It was the

second time this year that the country suspended operations at one of its key ports.”

Intel, among other major chip builders, are working with the government on a project to increase domestic supplies of chips that can replace or bolster production and reduce the dependence of imported parts. The rollout mostly depends on the Infrastructure’s bill passage. However, after examining all the details Intel and others will not have its new “fab” plant online before 2024. Other producers are waiting for Congress to pass legislation.

The impact upon prices has heretofore been minimal; however, prices are now jumping due to the shortage and high demand. For example, motherboards used to connect all the components like the CPU



and RAM, has more than doubled in price. That single component has added over \$100.00 to the price of a new computer. Other components, like video display cards have added an average of \$250.00 to the price of a new computer, and it is only going to get worse.

I predict prices will continue to rise from now through the end of 2023 at which time they should level off. As new production comes Online and the Covid crisis has passed (hopefully), there will be a brief reduction in prices. However, pent up demand will swell and prevent much discounting.

In my opinion, chip prices for computers, and other consumer products,

will continue to escalate through next year. This pressures overall prices for new computer purchases. Be aware that some manufactures will try to substitute cheaper chips with less functionality or older editions to keep prices at low and production flowing. Hence, the “race to the bottom” to keep prices low is not helpful in the long run as it shortens the lifespan of your purchase.

Your best response to all of this would be to upgrade your computer and extend its life to wait out the price surge or be ready to spend a bit more to replace it. As always, when in doubt, or if you have questions please contact your local computer expert for some guidance.



Carl “CW” Wolfe
Mayor, Clayton, CA
cw@claytonca.gov



Eagle Scouts honored



L-R: Justin Ruhl, Clayton, Michael Cianfrano, Clayton, Quinn O'Connor, Walnut Creek, and William McAdam, Clayton

Every so often being Mayor affords me the opportunity to present proclamations on behalf of the Clayton City Council and our citizens.

On August 7, 2021, I had the honor and pleasure of attending the Eagle Scout Court of Honor to present proclamations to our newest Troop 484 Eagle Scouts: Justin Ruhl, William McAdam, and Michael Cianfrano.

To reach this high goal each must demonstrate the ability to progress through the seven ranks of Scouting, earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, serve in a leadership position, and complete a community service project.

The Eagle Badge stands for a job started and finished, an understanding of our community and our nation, and a willingness to help others. It is a learning experience in Scouting skills, teamwork, and in Scout spirit as represented by living the Scout Oath and Law. It further exemplifies hard work and determination and only eight percent of all who enter Scouting achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

Congratulations to these young men on their well-deserved accomplishment! All citizens of Clayton are very proud to have you in our community.

All Contra Costa County Employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 4 or face termination

All Contra Costa County employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 4, or face discipline up to and including termination, according to a memo sent out by County Administrator Monica Nino on behalf of the Board of Supervisors.

Dated August 24, the memo states, “To best protect its employees and others in County facilities and utilizing County services, all employees who are not subject to a more stringent vaccination mandate by the California Public Health Officer or Contra Costa County Health Officer, must, as a condition of employment:

- No later than October 4, 2021, receive their final dose (either the second dose in a two-shot series or the first shot in a single shot series) of a COVID-19 vaccine; and
- Provide proof of their vaccination status to the County no later than October 4, 2021.”

It’s possible for employees to obtain a medical or religious exemption. Should such an exemption be issued, the employee in question must undergo weekly COVID-19 testing and must wear a mask or other approved or required face covering at all times while working indoors with others, Nino said. A medical or religious exemption from the vaccination requirements may only be granted if:

For Medical Reasons:

The employee must provide a written statement signed by their licensed physician, licensed nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional acting under the license of a physician stating that the individual qualifies for the exemption (but the statement should not describe the



underlying medical condition or disability) and indicating the probable duration of the worker’s inability to receive the vaccine (or if the duration is unknown or permanent, so indicate).

For Religious Reasons:

The employee holds a sincere religious belief, practice, or observance that is contrary to the practice of vaccination, and the employee provides written documentation and information to support an exemption.

Requests for medical and religious exemptions will be processed by the employee’s department personnel officer or by the County’s Human Resources Department and maintained as confidential medical information. Requests for an exemption as a reasonable accommodation for a medical or religious reason will be determined on an individualized case-by-case basis.

Failure to comply with the terms will result in discipline up to and including termination, according to the memo.

The mandate comes at a time when the Bay Area and the nation are seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases caused by the more contagious delta variant of the virus. In response, some cities and counties are considering or imposing vaccination mandates on their workers.

Nominees wanted: East Bay Leadership Council’s 11th Annual Philanthropy Awards



East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC) is looking for nominations for its annual Philanthropy Awards. The 11th Annual Awards will focus on the theme “Celebrating Resilience and Leading Us Forward.” EBLC hopes to amplify the ways our region is stepping up for each other and with each other to overcome challenges and envision a better future.

This community has heart and strives to act together for the common good. The Philanthropy Awards presented are an annual celebration of such generosity.

But first, EBLC needs your nominations. You can help them honor inspiring community leaders, philanthropists, employers, volunteers and youths who are working to sustain generosity, overcome adversity, and help others reach their full potential.

Nominations are done Online at <https://eastbayleadershipcouncil.com/philanthropy-awards>.

Award criteria is focused on equity, resilience, creativity, compassion, risk-taking, and sustained commitment.

Identify a nominee(s) who fit the criteria and prepare a narrative (limit to appx. 500 words) that shares the story of your nominee, demonstrating the reasons why your nominee deserves to be honored.

Tell a little bit about their background and how their generosity of time, resources, or spirit is making a difference for the East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa County). On the website fill out the nomination form and submit by on Monday, September 20.

Honorees will be announced by Friday, October 1 and all nominators will be contacted with the results. All are invited to attend the Philanthropy Awards virtual event to celebrate these inspiring community leaders. You will hear our honorees’ inspiring stories and learn more about the generosity that is driving change in our community.

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David George

THE NAKED GARDENER

Fire-Wise Gardens and Plants

Another September and our skies are hazy with smoke. Isn't it great to wake up to the sound of birds coughing and hacking? (An old joke.) Wildland fires are no laughing matter though and continue to rage in Northern California for the 5th straight summer. This dark trend is both frightening and a call to action. What can we gardeners do to help protect our homes from the threat of wildfire?

Local fire agencies offer advice on how to make simple and inexpensive fire-smart changes around your home. So let's review some basic "hardscapes" and planting recommendations for improving your home's fire safety with my favorite plant selections.

Fire Safe Hardscape

Within 5 feet of your house, do not mulch with a burnable material such as wood chips. Instead, use non-flammable substitutes like stone chips, pebbles, or river rock.

Vent screens in your roof eaves should have 1/8 inch wire mesh to prevent fire embers from entering your attic.

Rain gutters should also be covered with fine mesh to prevent combustible dead leaves and pine needles from building up. Do not store wood or other fire hazards under wood decks and keep wood piles at least 30 feet from your home. Composite deck material such as Trex can also burn.

Separate planted areas with wide gravel pathways, paved sidewalks, or well-watered lawns for fire breaks. Trees should not overhang your roof or chimney. Chimney outlets should also be covered with 1/4 - 1/2 inch mesh.

Fire-Wise Garden Guidelines

Well-irrigated plants around your home, including green lawns are good protection.



River rock borders protect structures.

Mature trees should be trimmed up 8-10 feet high from the ground. Dead branches should be removed (and composted), and green branches should be kept away from any flammable structure.

Trim shrubs under trees to 1/3 the height of the lowest tree limbs. Dead grasses and weeds should be weed-whacked (abated). Shrubs growing into trees are called "fire ladders". Fire ladders turn easily controlled grass fires into infernos in the crowns of trees. Select trees near your home that grow no taller than your rooftop.

If your home borders natural open spaces,



Sage and lavender resist burning

fire agencies require 100 feet of defensible space around your house. This means raking up leaf litter and dead branches, cutting down grasses and weeds, and trimming trees high. Maintain good separation between larger plants and remove any resinous or fire-prone bushes such as junipers, California lilac (ceanothus), or manzanita.

Great Plants for Fire Safety

There are many plants that resist fire. For groundcover, choose a plant that retains a lot of water in its leaves and stems, such as yellow ice plant, vinca minor, or ornamental strawberry. These will spread with overhead watering to cover large, fire-resistant areas. My favorite small shrubs (many natives) are from the lavender family (Lavandula), the sage family (Salvia), red monkey flower, California fuchsia, or coreopsis. Carpet or dwarf roses are also quite good but watch out for thorns!

For evergreen and leafy large shrubs (or small trees), I recommend the California native redbud, coastal silk tassel, and toyon.



Citrus makes a great fire break.

For small deciduous trees select dogwoods, the flowering fruit trees (plum, pear, cherry,

or crabapple, or any citrus or maple variety.

With standard-sized trees, choose leafy and green deciduous varieties that grow in drier regions like ours, such as big leaf maples, sycamores, fremontia, or crape myrtles. They provide nice shade and don't need a lot of water.

Native coastal live oaks and valley oaks are fire neutral, meaning they don't explode when exposed to fire like pine trees, but they do burn and generate large embers that fly on the wind.

You DO NOT want trees full of resin, sap or oil, such as eucalyptus, cedars, or bay laurels near your home. Pine and fir trees also burn easily. Redwoods have that remarkable fire-resistant bark, but the rest of tree is resinous and will burn vigorously. Enjoy their beauty from a distance.

What are your favorites? Let me know. For more information about fire-resistant landscaping, check out: <https://www.ready-forwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/>. Take their advice because the home or neighborhood you save may be your own!

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

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NEW STORE HOURS
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11 AM - 6 PM SUNDAYS
CLOSED TUESDAYS

Views of the Valley

Photos by Micah



Free Comic Book Day. This is always popular at Flying Colors Comics in Concord. What originated as this shop's promotion has grown to be an international event in over 65 countries. Photo by Micah.



Cartoonist John Hagemen, Comic writer Mel Smith, and artist Brandon McKinney, sign autographs inside Flying Colors. Below: Meeting a character and picking up a free comic book brings joy to this little fellow.



Good weather and crafts brought a large crowd downtown for Martinez Maker Market on Main Street on August 21.



A hiker who fell down an embankment on the Black Diamond Trail in the hills east of Oakhurst Country Club in Clayton was rescued by helicopter. Photo by Mark Dixon, courtesy Claycord.



This gent brought his duck out for Salsa night at Music and Market in Concord's Todos Santos Park.



Sally Scott proudly shows off her doodle art using ink pens. She is homeless in Concord.

pair up!

End of Summer Dining

By Maria Terry



Welcome to Pair Up. My goal is to create pairings of food and beverage to heights neither would see alone.

Each month, I introduce a full evening of fantastic menu selections with suggestions on the best beverages to complement the food's flavors.

I want to empower you to make your own selections that provide you with the style and flavor profile of the wine while leaving the selection of producer and price up to you and your trusted retailer.

For the end of summer, I have created a menu that pairs up the lighter foods of summer with refreshing wines.

Sauvignon Blanc immediately comes to mind. It is the quintessential summer wine: light, crisp and refreshing. Its citrusy, herbal flavors go perfectly with almost any summer-time food.

Anything you squirt a bit of lemon on or sprinkle with fresh herbs will harmonize beautifully with the flavors found in a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc. My absolute favorite food pairing with Sauvignon Blanc is tangy, fresh goat cheese. Goat Cheese Crostini with Roasted Beets transforms the cheese into a creamy spread. The wine's light body matches the delicacy of the cheese, the herbal character echoes the fresh herbs in the spread, and the crisp acidity stands up to the bite the cheese offers.

Salmon Topped with Seared Baby Tomatoes in Lemon Brown Butter is a delicious main course. A little fresh thyme, salt and pepper are all that is needed for the fish because the seared tomatoes bring an explosion of lemony goodness.

The Sauvignon Blanc you opened earlier can continue right on into dinner, or if it is gone, you can open a delicate Pinot Noir. Pinot Noir is fantastic with grilled salmon because it is lower in tannin and will not stomp all over the tender fish.

Salmon has plenty of its own oil and fat, so when it takes on a little smoke from the grill, it will make a lightly oaked red ring.

Serve with crusty bread and a mixed green salad dressed with lemon vinaigrette.

If you still have room for dessert, pair Luscious Lemon Bars with Italy's sweet sparkler Moscato d'Asti. The sweet/sour combination of the lemon bar is balanced by the slight residual sugar in the wine while the bubbles clear your palate for the next bite.

Always remember that the wine should be sweeter than the dessert. If the wine isn't sweet enough, it will taste sour; it is better to serve a bitter counterpoint to the sweet dessert such as French Roast coffee.

So, go on. Pair Up!

GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI WITH ROASTED BEETS

INGREDIENTS

Beets:
¾ pound beets (about 2 medium)
1 cup water
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
Salt & pepper to taste

Cheese Spread:

1 (5-ounce) package goat cheese
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon
Freshly ground black pepper

Crostini:

24 (1/2" thick) slices diagonally cut French bread baguette, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt, baked at 275° for 15 minutes or until crunchy

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the components of this recipe ahead and assemble at the last minute.

Preheat oven to 375°. For beets: leave root and 1" of stem on beets, scrub with a brush. Place beets in an 11" x 7" baking dish and add 1 cup water to dish. Cover and bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool. Using gloves, unless you want pink hands, trim off beet roots, and then rub off



skins. Cut beets lengthwise into quarters and cut each quarter cross-wise into 9 (1/8") slices.

Combine vinegar, rind, juice, salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a medium bowl. Add beets, toss gently to coat.

To prepare cheese spread, combine goat cheese, mayonnaise, tarragon, garlic and pepper to taste in a small bowl. Spread each baguette slice with 1 teaspoon cheese mixture, top with three slightly overlapping slices of beet.

Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 2 crostini)

SALMON TOPPED WITH SEARED BABY TOMATOES IN LEMON BROWN BUTTER

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. salmon filet
Fresh thyme
Salt and pepper

Tomatoes in Lemon Brown Butter:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 pint grape tomatoes
½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
4 tbsp. butter
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt and Pepper

DIRECTIONS

Season fish with salt, pepper and fresh thyme. Grill or sear over high heat until just cooked through.

In a large skillet, heat oil to smoke point. Add the tomatoes and let them sear on one side for about 3 minutes. Add half the parsley and season with salt and pepper. Shake pan and cook for about 2 more minutes (the tomatoes will start to burst). Remove from pan. Cover with foil to keep warm.

Add the butter to the hot pan. Once the butter begins to brown around the edges, add the lemon juice and remaining parsley. Pour the hot lemon butter over the tomatoes.

Yield: 4 servings

LUSCIOUS LEMON BARS

INGREDIENTS

2 sticks (8 ounces) butter
2 cups flour
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
4 beaten eggs
2 cups sugar
4 tablespoons flour
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon peel
Sifted confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 325°.

Blend butter, 2 cups flour and 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar. Pat into ungreased 13x9x2-inch pan. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes.

For filling, blend together eggs, sugar, 4 tablespoons flour, lemon juice, and lemon peel.

Pour over first layer. Return to oven and bake at 325° for 20 minutes.

Loosen around edges, cut into bars and sift confectioners' sugar over the top while warm.

Yield: 24 bars

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

5 Ways to Preserve Fall Fruits

By Deb Morris, PCFMA



There's not much that surpasses the flavors of apples, pears, grapes, figs, or persimmons in the cool fall months. You should be consuming produce in-season for the best flavor and nutrition, but sometimes it's nice to have the taste of an apple or pear to enjoy during the off season. Preserving fall produce for later use means you can enjoy seasonal favorites all year long. A bag of crispy cinnamon apple or persimmon chips, a jar of canned pears, or even pickled figs and grapes could be what you need. When preserving, remember to start with the best fruit that is fresh and flavorful. Often you can find unique varieties available at a local farmers market.

Canning -One of the most flexible ways to preserve fruit is canning. Canning preserves fruit for about a year or so. Jams, spreads, butters, and fruit in syrup are just some of the delicious foods you can create with a simple water bath canner, jars, and a few tools. Apple butter and pears in light syrup are two easy ones to try. Just be sure to follow directions in your approved recipe to avoid illness or contamination. Visit the National Center for Food Preservation website at nchfp.uga.edu. Uses: Top toast or ice cream with jams and butters, pour on top of chicken or pork.

Pickling -This version of canning allows for many fruits to be preserved by adding vinegar, salt, and pickling spices. Usually, vegetables are pickled, but homemade pears, grapes, figs, and even persimmons can be pickled. Pickled fruits can last up to two years because of the acidic content. Uses: Impress at your next dinner party featuring homemade pickles on your charcuterie board, pepper jelly topping on a block of cream cheese.

Dehydrating - Love apple chips? Using a dehydrator, the oven, or even the sun can produce some great snacks using fall and winter produce. Persimmon, apple, and pear chips are some favorites. An easy way to make raisins at home is to use a dehydrator. Dehydrated foods should be used within four months. One drawback to dehydrating is that it takes time and patience to dry fruit to the desired consistency. But the results are delicious! Uses: Mix your dried fruit with nuts for a homemade trail mix, or add to quick breads and muffins, or add to yogurt or your morning oatmeal.

Fermenting - This form of food preservation has been experiencing a renaissance as people discover the advantages of fermenting for the probiotics that are created. Start with a fermenting kit, or visit reliable websites to learn how. Apples, figs, grapes, and more can be fermented. The difference between fermentation and pickling is that fermentation is preservation through

a bacterial reaction, whereas pickling is preservation via salt and acid. Uses: Make pastrami and homemade sauerkraut sandwiches, add to potato salad, toss in salads.

Freezing - Almost all fruit can be frozen. They are easily frozen, but some do not maintain their firmness. Frozen fruit is better used for sauces and jams. A good investment is one of the seal-a-meal machines if you do a lot of freezing. Many of your seasonal produce selections can be stored, defrosted and used at a later date. Frozen fruit should last several months. Uses: Pull fruit from the freezer for easy-to-prepare jams, make healthy smoothies in the blender.

Enjoy fruits of any season by preserving their flavor and nutrients using the methods above. This month at your Concord Farmers' Market you'll find crisp apples and pears from Rainbow Orchards in Camino, plump grapes, persimmons, and apples from J&J Ramos out of Hughson, and apples from Smit Farms in Linden. Support your local farmers and shop the farmers' market where you know you'll be getting the freshest and most diverse selection of fruit.

Pickled Asian Pears



2 pounds Asian pears, very hard
1-1/3 cups Chinese white rice vinegar (can substitute distilled white vinegar. Cider vinegar not recommended, adds too much apple flavor)
1-1/3 cups water
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons salt

Peel, wash, seed, and cut the pears in quarters. Add to glass Mason jars.

Mix all remaining ingredients well, until dissolved. Pour into the jars. Cover tightly. Keep in refrigerator, undisturbed, for at least 3 days before use. These pears will keep refrigerated for at least 6 months.

Makes about two to three pint jars, four to six servings. Adapted from "The Chinese Kitchen" by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo.

calendar of events

YOUR PARTNER IN BUSINESS

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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FUNDRAISER

October 22
36th Annual Mayor's Cup
 11:00am- 7:00pm. Entry fee. \$150/person; \$125/seniors and city employees. Proceeds benefit the Concord Historical Society, The First Tee Contra Costa Youth Golf Program, Concord Junior giants. Diablo Creek Golf Course. 4050 Port Chicago Highway, Concord. 925-686-6266

EVENTS

Farmers' Markets

Concord Tuesdays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, year-round, rain or shine. Todos Santos Plaza, Concord
 Thursdays 6:30pm. - 8:00pm., Todos Santos Plaza

Martinez Sundays, 9:00am to 2:00pm, year-round, 700 Main St.

Walnut Creek Rossmoor - Fridays 9:30am. to 1:00pm., Golden Rain Rd. Shadelands - Saturdays 9:00am.-1:00 pm. North Wiget Ln & Mitchell Dr. Sunday 9:00am. - 1:00pm. North Locust St between Cole and Lacassie St. (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

CONCORD

September 14

Caring for Elders in Your Life: Ask the Experts - Join Center for Elders' Independence 4:30-6:00 PM for an interactive panel discussion with senior care doctors, memory care experts, and a family caregiver. Register for this free event at: <https://bit.ly/3m7WZ20>

September 15-October 15 Concord Taco Trail Find the best Taco among 40 participating eateries. (no chains). Become Concord's taco-eating champion. Pick up map of participating restaurants at Concord Visitor Center at Todos Santos Plaza.

September 16
Grand Opening of Visit Concord Visitor Center. Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting and mixer. Plus launch of Concord Taco Trail with Mexican food, maragitas, mariachi and wine. 4pm-6pm. 25 Salvio Street, Suite T. FREE!

WALNUT CREEK

September 9
Diablo Ballet's 10th Annual Gourmet Food and Wine Walk
 6:00pm-8:30pm.
 21 locations downtown. Check-in at Massimo Ristorante. Tickets \$45 at www.diabloballet.org

SEPTEMBER 20

Walnut Creek Sir Branch #116 hosts "Storm Chaser" **George Kourounis**. Kourounis has spent 25 years documenting extreme forces including tornados, hurricanes, volcanoes, avalanches, etc.

Best known for TV's "Angry Planet" and "Storm Hunters", he has been seen on Netflix, Smithsonian, Discovery and Weather Channels and many others. This is a 11:45am Zoom meeting. go to website for more info. <https://sirinc2.org/branch116/>

October 9-10

Fall Contra Costa Crystal Fair



Over 30 vendors of rocks, gems, crystals, minerals, beads & jewelry, and mystical enchantments. Saturday 10am-6pm. Sunday 10am-4pm. Admission \$12 (good for both days) Children under 12 free and must wear mask. Adults: Masks and proof of vaccination are required. Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr.

RUTH BANCROFT GARDEN

1552 Bancroft Rd. Walnut Creek
RuthBancroftGarden.org.

September 12

Member Coffee in the Garden: Family Edition- 9:00am-10:00am bring your little ones for free educational activity.

Children Events

September 8 - Story Time "Who Am I?" with author Susan Deming. 10:00am-10:30am.

September 12 Creativity Corner: Wood and Wool 10:00am-11:00am.

September 22 - Acorns: Under the Oak Tree. Make acorn character. Learn how oak grows from acorn to tree.

September 19, 26 October 3, 18 Mitchell Canyon Tarantula Hike - 5:00pm - 7:30pm. In October 4:45pm-6:45pm. A nature walk through Mitchell Canyon that will dispel any malicious rumors you might have heard about Mount Diablo's misunderstood eight-legged creatures.

September 19, 26 & October 10 Lindsay Wildlife Experience Tarantula Hikes.

Age 6-Adult Explore the habitat of local tarantulas along the north face of Mount Diablo with an experienced naturalist. These eight-legged, carnivorous yet docile creatures come out of hiding in search of mates. Discover and observe the diverse plants and animals inhabiting Mount Diablo. Hikes cover a distance of 2 miles

MARTINEZ

The Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society

September 18 11:00am; September 24 8:00pm. Enjoy several running model trains running through miniature cities and mountainous terrain. Located at 2751 Buena Vista Ave. Walnut Creek. (Admission): \$3 Adults, \$2. Children (6-12) / Seniors. FREE for kids 5 years and younger.

September

Main Street Arts



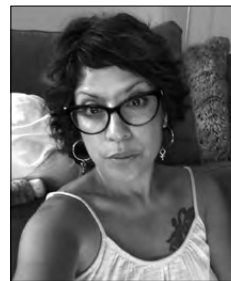
Exhibiting of Main Street Arts Association members featuring Denise Hillman and 18 other artists. 631 Main Street.

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

September 18

Tri-Valley Writers meeting.

Michelle Cruz Gonzales will present "Inclusive Characterization: Writing 'the Other' Without Stereotypes or Appropriation." 2:00p.m. at Four Points by Sheraton in Pleasanton.



MUSIC AND MARKET

SERIES Thursdays, Todos Santos Concord. 6:30pm-8:00pm

September 9 - The Purple Ones (Prince tribute)

September 16 - Zeparella, Led Zepel in Tribute

September 23 - Local Music Night: the Unoriginals, Sabertooth Unicorn
September 30 - Native Elements

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

September 18-19
California Symphony "Emporer" (18th) 7:30pm/ (19th) 4:00pm

Diablo Ballet 28th Season 2021-2022. Tickets go on sale through the Leshner Center for the Arts. November 12-13, 2021 - Nutcracker Suite; February 11-12, 2022 Cinderella's Wedding; April 7, 2022 - 28th Anniversary Performance; May 20-21, 2022 - Copplélia

September 10, 12

Solo Opera's "Scalia/Ginsburg"
 One hour comedic opera in English by Derrick Wang. Friday, September 10, 8:00pm. Sunday September 12 2:00pm

Phone and Online Tickets include additional fees. Leshnerartcenter.org 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

VERANDA

2001 Diamond Blvd. Concord

YOGA IN THE PARK

First Friday of the month. FREE. At the Veranda Pavilion Fountain Park. 9:30am-10:30am.

September 6 - Feed the Kitty concert, Kitty's Rockumentary Tour. 12:00pm-2:00pm. Pavilion Fountain Park.

September 12 - Sips and Sounds at Residual Sugar. Jeff Tamelier and Chris Cole perform. 4:00pm-7:00pm.

September 19 Kids Club Concert featuring Andy Z. \$5. 10:10am-11:30am.

September 19 - Sips and Sounds at Residual sugar. Chris Ahlman performs. 6:00pm-8:00pm.

September 24 - Sips and Sounds 4:00pm-7:00pm. Jeff Tamelier and Chris Cole perform.

Independent Filmmaker Day
 Live Via Zoom
 Sept. 11, 2021 - 12 - 7 pm EST - Film/TV Panels
 Sept. 12, 2021 - 12 - 7 pm EST - Expert Roundtables & Pitchfest Awarding Over \$40,000 in Prizes!

FEATURED PANELISTS

					
Bill Straus Executive Producer for Straight Outta Compton	Darryl Porter Producer Menace II Society Dead Presidents	Kevin Bright Emmy Winning Exec. Producer of Friends	Ted Farnsworth Chairman, Zash Entertainment & MoviePass	Brette Goldstein Casting Director Bravo, USA, PBS, Nickelodeon	Ken Atchity Executive Producer The Meg and Life or Something Like It

Independent Filmmaker Day presents Panel Discussions, Expert Roundtables, a Pitchfest and After-Party to help your dreams become reality! For beginners to experienced filmmakers. More information and tickets at eventbrite.com.

The City of Clayton Proudly Presents

Concerts in The Grove 2021

Saturdays 6:00pm to 8:30pm
 Downtown Clayton

Welcome Back!

September 11
East Bay Mudd

East Bay Mudd - This dynamic nine-piece band has been thrilling audiences for years with their upbeat, powerful take on Classic Soul, Funk and R&B classics. This horn-heavy, funk-inflected, rhythm & blues ensemble will rock you back to the best of Tower of Power, Chicago, Earth, Wind, & Fire, and more. With a soulful, dynamic lead vocalist, a tight four-piece horn section and a solid rhythm section, this band is a great finale for our concert season. www.eastbaymudd.com

Walking to The Grove is recommended as parking is limited in the downtown area.

Love is in the air...for tarantulas

By Jill Hedgecock Photos by Dian Walsh, endlesspaws28.com



Photo by Ken Lavin

They are big, hairy, and while many people have nightmares about encountering one, I bubbled over with excitement at the prospect of going on an evening hike searching for tarantulas. It is the time of year that male tarantulas emerge from underground in search of a mate. Between late August through the first week of October, Mount Diablo is a great place to go observe these fascinating creatures firsthand, and the experience is even better if you can go on a scheduled hike with a tarantula expert.

On August 19th, naturalists Ken Lavin and Liz Watson, who lead tarantula hikes through the Mount Diablo Interpretive Center, met with photographer Diane Walsh, my husband, Eric, and me. We assembled at a picnic table near the main parking lot at Mitchell Canyon, a popular place to track down these giant arachnids, to learn more about the behavior and biology of these fascinating creatures before we departed on our scheduled hike to look for roaming males.

Of the over 850 tarantula species worldwide, only 18 species are known to inhabit California. The most common species in the Bay area is one of the desert tarantula species, *Aphonopelma iodium*.

After Lavin regaled us with historical stories about a pioneering geologist who found a tarantula in his boot and described some of his favorite tarantula movies, he plucked a giant plastic tarantula out of his tutorial box and described the unique traits of these amazing spiders.

"They have exoskeletons," said Lavin. "They are growing on the inside, but their skeleton is not growing, so eventually it's very uncomfortable. They will lie on their back, pump up their blood pressure into their abdomen (spiders have only two body parts, not three like insects) and pull themselves out of the outer shell, which is called the carapace. They will have new legs, new fangs, new stomach lining, new lungs, and the female will have new lady parts. For a few days, they will be very vulnerable. They're soft until they harden."

He passed around an old carapace he uses for teaching and pointed out the fangs.

"Their fangs are fixed in place," Lavin said. "They have to rear up and strike down. So you have plenty of warning."

Female tarantulas stay in their burrows most of their lives and can live to be 25 years old. Males are not so lucky with a life span of only 7 to 8 years. The only way to tell the sex of one, other than where you find them since only males wander far from their burrows, is after the male's final molt. Then he will have hooks on the underside of their front legs, called pedipalps, that keep the female's fangs away from him during mating.

"Aphonopelma means silent sole—as

in sole of the foot," explained Lavin, who grew interested in tarantulas after he saw them hiking. He has been a fan for about 20 years now. "You kind of cringe when you first see them if you're not used to them," said Lavin. "I got interested in the historical aspect."

Watson's interest in tarantulas arose for a very different reason. "They are very sweet, docile creatures," Watson said, "and just misunderstood. I like to explain to people that these are very, cool creatures."

"She likes to terrorize her school," Ken added, and laughed. "She has the teacher's lounge to herself."

Watson is right about being misunderstood. Myths abound about tarantulas. One of the most common is that a tarantula bite is fatal. But there have been no documented cases of human deaths from tarantula bites. While a wound caused by their long, fangs may be unpleasant, their weak venom is not strong enough to take out a human. It is possible, though extremely unlikely, if a bite goes untreated, that a person could develop complications like gangrene and die, but a quick trip to the doctor will prevent that.

Humans are also generally unaffected by the tarantula's main defense against its predators, the special hairs, called urticating hairs, located on their abdomens. Tiny barbs on them irritate the skin or injure their foe's eyes. For some birds, small mammals, and snakes, these hairs can sometimes cause severe injury.

Another popular misconception is that tarantulas are aggressive and will jump 5 to 10 feet in the air to attack you. First, tarantulas are not aggressive to humans unless mishandled. Second, a jump of several feet would cause internal organ damage and kill the spider. Third, tarantulas have poor vision and cannot see much besides shadows. They depend on the silk that covers the ground in and around their burrows to send a vibration to identify their prey.

The common myth that the female eats the male after mating is also not true. Males have a slow demise after mating. Once they leave their burrows, males do not have access to food and will slowly starve, so the female has nothing to do with their death.

Some believe tarantulas are miniature vampires hell-bent on sucking your blood. No. The diet of these hairy creatures is primarily grasshoppers, beetles, other small spiders and arthropods, but they will sometimes eat small lizards.

They have an interesting digestive system which involves vomiting on their food to liquify it. Its stomach can expand and contract so that it can suck up liquids like a vacuum cleaner. When a tarantula gorges itself, it breaks down the food into liquids and stores it in an elaborate system of sacs and pouches throughout the body, allowing it to go for several days without eating again.

So why are these gentle creatures so maligned? Hollywood can share a good deal of the blame. Spider-centric horror flicks like "Tarantula!" (1955), "The Incredible Shrinking Man" (1957), "Tarantulas: The Deadly Cargo" (1977), "Kingdom of the Spiders" (1977), "Something Wicked This Way Comes" (1983), "Arachnophobia" and "Home Alone" (both released in 1990) are a few movies that depict these animals as vicious, blood-thirsty scary creatures. The poster for "Tarantula!" shows a two-eyed, rather than 8-eyed, spider showing how little Hollywood understands these ma-



Tarantulas have poor vision and depend on the silk that covers the ground in and around their burrows to send a vibration to locate their prey.



ligned creatures.

Liz Watson brought her pet rose hair tarantula, Scarlett O'Harry, so we got to meet and hold one of these furry spiders firsthand. They are surprisingly light weight. While I was not afraid, the crawling legs made me a little ticklish.

"Pet spiders aren't lonely," says Lavin, who also keeps one as a pet. "If another one was introduced, she'd probably kill it."

Both said their most memorable tarantula experience was when they were on a hike and captured a pair mating on video. While hundreds of fertilized eggs will hatch after mating, Watson explained, only a few will live into adulthood.

humans are a major threat to the species, mostly due to habitat destruction. Natural predators include lizards, snakes,

skunks, coyote, foxes, and birds such as hawks and roadrunners are known to eat them. One of their biggest enemies are parasites such as the tarantula hawk wasp. This large wasp stings the spider to paralyze it, lays eggs on it and seals it into a burrow. When the wasp larva hatches, it eats the tarantula. Fortunately, wildfires do not kill these underground dwellers.

Lavin warned not to capture one and keep it as a pet. You will be investing in a terrarium, food and other necessities, only to have the

mature males die in a few months. It is much better to purchase one from a pet store.

It is rare for tarantulas to invade homes or garages, but they can be found floating in pools. If you do find one around your house, Lavin advises to have it walk into a cup and let it go. If you find one in your pool, fish it out, and it will walk away.

"They can survive in flooded burrows for days," says Lavin. "They have such a slow metabolism."

These normally nocturnal creatures are elusive, but the males appear predictably during early evening hours of their mating season.

However, with the warming climate, insects are emerging earlier in the year and the males are growing and molting faster. October used to be prime time, but now the lovelorn males are coming out as early as late August. Throw in drought conditions and tarantula sightings become even more unpredictable. Alas, our quest was too early in the season, so we did not see any wandering males during our hike, but we had the pleasure of seeing their burrows.

Lavin and Watson are offering tarantula hikes on Saturday, September 4th and 18th from 5 to 7:30 pm. Space is limited, and they are currently full, but you can check mdia.org for cancellations. You can also hike along the trail by yourself. You may just get lucky. It is important to avoid picking up a wild tarantula as they are quite fragile and a fall of even a few inches can damage their internal organs.

The Lindsay Wildlife Museum also offers tarantula hikes on Sundays, September 19th and 26th, from 5 to 7 pm. On October 3rd and 10th, they will be held from 4:45 to 6:45 pm. The Lindsay Museum hikes cost \$15 and \$20 for members and nonmembers, respectively. There is an additional \$6 fee to park at Mitchell Canyon.



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Did you know trees talk to each other?

The natural world is full of secrets. The amazing science behind how trees talk to each other. When a person stands in a forest, they may have no idea of the invisible messages that are being sent via underground fungal networks or through pheromones attached to spores in the wind.

Through the Air

Trees can communicate with each other using pheromones and scent signals they release into the air. One remarkable tree that utilizes this method of communication to protect its neighboring companions is the umbrella horned acacia, found in the grasslands of the African savanna.

When giraffes chew on this tree's juicy, sickle-shaped leaves, the umbrella horned



Illustration by Frites Ahlefeldt, courtesy hiking.org

acacia notices the injury and emits a distress signal in the form of ethylene gas. The gas signals the surrounding trees to begin pumping tannins into their leaves.

When a giraffe or other herbivore munches on these tannin-enriched leaves, they can become deathly sick. Other animals subsequently avoid the tree's leaves.

Through the Soil

Trees are often thought of as singular entities, but most of the time they are connected to a larger, mutually beneficial community of trees through underground fungal networks. This system allows a collective of trees to share resources and make decisions about nutrient flow, which direction to grow branches, and how to deter predators.

The fungal networks, called mycorrhizal networks, consist of very thin threads of mycelium, or mushrooms, that help trees communicate with each other underneath the soil. By linking to this network, trees

can spread information to their neighbors. For example, if an older established tree becomes aware of a struggling sapling through the network, it can draw water towards the surface through its root system to help the sapling. Trees can also agree to sabotage unwelcome plants by directing toxic chemicals through the network.



Photo courtesy Evolve communities

A Supportive Network

Trees can distinguish their "family" from other neighboring trees. Using seedlings, ecologists at the University of Reading were able to determine that trees can recognize the root tips of their kin and distinguish them from unrelated seedlings. Related trees show kinship by sending extra carbon through the underground mycorrhizal networks. When threatened with drought or disease, predators or insect attacks, trees will warn and prioritize family.

Courtesy of the arborists at Sexy Trees in Concord. www.sexytrees.com

ARBORGLYPH DETECTIVE: THE KID TREE

By Shereen Motarjemi

Speaking of talking trees, in the bank of a creek just off Pleasant Hill Road stands an old tree bearing evidence of visits by children. There are dozens of etchings and initials carved into the bark, in numerous styles. No doubt this was a popular kid place. Just what do these "ancient" arborglyphs reveal? Who were these youngsters and what became of them?

Many of the carvings date back to the 1960's and 70's, to a time when Pleasant Hill was more rural, and children freely roamed its creeks. Kids from that era knew that creeks are special places. There are pollywogs to catch and rock dams to build.



There are trees to climb and critters to watch. But one of the creek's greatest draws was what was absent

from it: grownups. This was one of the few places where a kid could be free.

"Meet at the tree," was all a child had to do to find friends in those days, and when kids congregate, there can be mischief. It's easy to imagine why a youngster would carve his initials in a tree. It's an announcement, "I AM ME and I AM HERE!"

I set out on a mission to uncover the mystery of one such carving and close the books on an early Pleasant Hill love story. (You can just call me Shereen Motarjemi, Arborglyph Detective.)

In those days, parents were less concerned that children were out of earshot the whole day. Moms were confident that their kids would be home when they got hungry.

In 1968 Joel Primrose lived on Mercury Way near Grayson Creek and spent his summer days from "6:30am to sunset" exploring the fields, orchards and creeks in Pleasant Hill. Joel loved the outdoors, but that's not all he loved. His heart belonged to beautiful Katie Clark, with her freckles



and dark hair. He did his darnedest to woo his beloved, like carrying her books and carving their names into the tree. He would find excuses to ride his bike past her house many times each day. From Katie's point of view, he was a pest and she rejected his overtures again and again.

Today they are both in their late 50's, happily married to other people. Joel served in the military and then had a long career as a fire fighter – an appropriate path for someone with his energy. Katie

stayed in Pleasant Hill to raise her family. Even though they lost touch decades ago, each remembers the other from that time in 5th grade when Joel secretly carved: "Joel LOVES Katie" into an old buckeye tree next to a creek.

(This article originally published Diablo Gazette, October 2017)

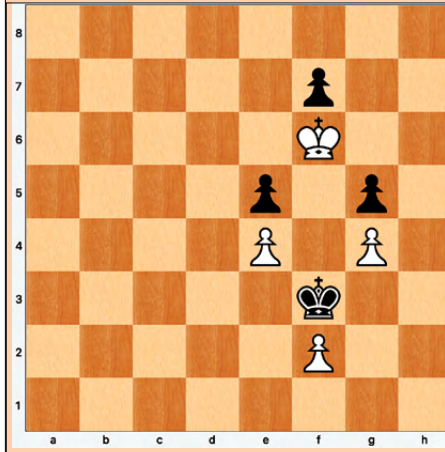


Chess with Yoo

Composed by Christopher Yoo, 14, International Master, Dublin, Calif.

Zugzwang!

A situation in which one player is put in a disadvantage because of his obligation to move. White to move.



Solution:

1.Kf5! Black is in zugzwang. If White were to move Black could take the e4 or g4 pawn, but Black has to make a move that worsens his position. **1...f6!?**

If **1...Kxf2** **2.Kxg5** **Kf3** **3.Kf5** **f6** **4.Kxf6** **Kxe4** **5.g5+-** (white has the clear advantage)

2.Kxf6 **Kf4!** A funny situation! Black is attempting to put White in zugzwang now.

3.f3! **Kxf3** **4.Kf5!** The final decisive zugzwang. Simple, but I found this a bit amusing!



HARVEST TIME!



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

This is NOT a Bubble, is it?

While there are many differences from the 2007-2008 real estate bubble, some fear that we are on that path again.

The truth is that the income of the buyers cannot keep up with the high rise in prices at some point.

That will result in a leveling off in numbers of offers for each home as those who can no longer afford them drop out of the competition. Make sense?

Interest rates are also a factor. As prices are high now, the interest rates under 4% and the resurgence of Stated Income Loans are allowing folks to purchase more expensive homes with reasonable payments based on their income. As interest rates rise, what buyers can afford reduces, thus a price leveling off or reduction takes place to get those homes sold.

What does all this mean? Just as in the past 5 years, it could mean buy now and secure a stable, lower house payment for the home you want to stay in. This in part may be why there are fewer homes on the market to buy.

Lower inventory could be a result of the refinance market providing folks lower mortgage payments on their current homes, resulting in a decision to stay in their homes for the long term.

I have heard many say they could not afford to purchase the home they live in today. The refinance has reduced their payments and keeps them in a home they may love.

Some reasons National Association of Realtors and other real estate data sources say it may not be a bubble, and different than the 2007 market are as follows:

LOW INVENTORY – Inventory of homes on the market: 2007 - 4 million, 2021 - 1.03 million.

FIXED RATE MORTGAGES - Pre-2007 there were no qualifying loans, short term adjustable rate loans, and other mortgage products that led to fraud and folks who could not afford homes but purchased anyway.

Today a 30-year fixed rate mortgage can be under 4% with good credit and lender qualification.

FORECLOSURE RATES – Because of the loans noted above, there was a high rate of foreclosures and short sales (where the mortgage payoff is less than what is owed on the mortgage).

In March of 2008, there were 234,685 foreclosure filings. Some were due to the adjustable rate mortgages resetting people could not afford the new payment. However, in March 2021 there were only 11,880 foreclosure filings.

Time will tell of course. It is much easier to look back and say what happened, but it may not be a Bubble, just a leveling off and/or a market adjustment that is coming. We are not likely to see foreclosures and short sales to the degree that happened after the 2007-2008 market. Folks are being thoughtful about what they buy and buying within their means. These are all healthy signs for the market.

IF you are ready to buy or sell, or just looking for more real estate market insights, give me a call. I'm happy to answer any questions, anytime. Happy House hunting.

the concordian
by Edi Birsan, EdiBirsan@gmail.com

The Afghans Are Coming



Local Afghan community held a rally to support arriving refugees, Todos Santos on August 28, with speakers Mariam Fazli, Councilmember Carlyn Obringer and Mayor McGallian. Photos by Micah.

Actually, Afghans are already here and have been for years. There are two mosques in Concord, one on Treat Blvd. in the rehabilitated Mason Hall with their initials NICC on the outside, and the other on Clayton Road, the Contra Costa Islamic Community Center near the BART station.

We in Concord have a sizable Afghan community. In fact, the police officer of the year is from there and she speaks two of the main languages there: Dari and Pashtun. The NICC mosque is also unique in that it has a language school that teaches both those languages as well as Farsi and Arabic.

According to contacts from Congressman Mark DeSaulnier office, we may get initially 30+ refugees here, all of which should have family here. When they arrive, they will need support both emotionally and materially to adjust to their new home.

I have been in contact with the schools for the kids that come. By good luck one of the refugees to already arrive is a teacher from Kabul and the school district is talking to them.

Concord also has the Jewish Family Community Services Refugee Services, 2151 Salvio, Suite 350 with the Refugees

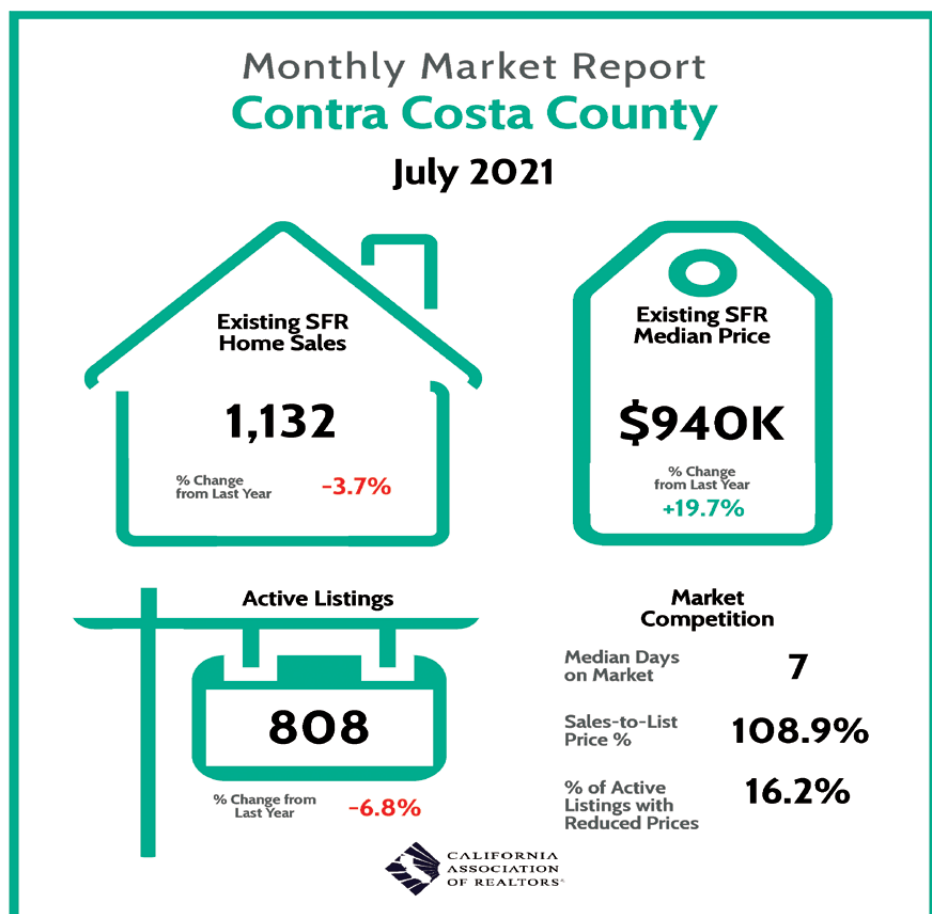
and Immigrant Director, Fouzia Azizi. They are one of the longest and successful care group for all refugees from any place.

I have also been in contact with the Trade Unions to see what can be done to get them into a path of apprenticeship in the trades.

There will be a meeting the day after this deadline to work out some details with the community. What may evolve is a Non-Profit coordination center for donations, supplies and volunteers.

We should all remember that our city was in effect founded to serve the displaced people from the total destruction of the town of Pacheco in 1868 because of the Hayward Earthquake. The Pacheco-Gallindo family gifted land lots for one dollar for those that came from there to restart their business. The family named the place Todos Santos, but the people quickly started calling it Concord. They were in great need of concord (harmony among people) then as will the people coming from Afghanistan under far worse conditions.

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The Four Winds

"The Four Winds" (St. Martins Press; 2021, hardcover, 464 pages; \$14.49) by Kristin Hannah, is the story of Elsa (Wolcott) Martinelli who grew up in a sheltered existence in a wealthy Texas household. A sickly child, she was often ignored by her parents and relegated to the confines of her home where she learns skills such as sewing, embroidery, and reading. Her prospects for marriage and escape from her dreary existence are slim. Until one day she takes matters into her own hands and decides to go out on the town. Here she meets Rafe and they have an affair that leaves Elsa pregnant and banished from her family home. Rafe steps up and marries Elsa. However, Rafe, who had planned to go off to college, feels trapped.

Elsa's heart's desire is to find a place where she belongs. She soon discovers this acceptance in her in-laws. Rose and Tony, immigrants from Sicily, welcome her into their home. Rose teaches Elsa how to survive the rigors of farm life. After their daughter, Loreda, is born, Elsa finds deep satisfaction on the Martinelli farm, despite her rocky relationship with Rafe.

Elsa's husband is a dreamer, unhappy with his rooted life in Texas. He longs to see the world and even the birth of their second child, a son, fails to settle him. As Loreda matures, Rafe plants his seeds of discontent in her. Loreda sees her mother as the cause of Rafe's unhappiness which creates tension in their mother-daughter relationship.

It isn't until the drought and Dust Bowl hit, sending the Martinellis into a constant state of uncertainty and poverty, that Rafe does what he has been telling Loreda he

wants to do. He abandons his family in the middle of the night. Soon after, the health hazards posed by the constant grit in the air forces Elsa to head west for a better life with her two children.



Filled with historical details of an epic time on the American frontier, "The Four Winds" chronicles the lives of one midwestern farm family that represents the livelihood of thousands of Americans. Those who migrated from the ravages of the dustbowl into California soon discovered the hardships are not over as they entered into the era of the Great Depression.

Kristin Hannah is the award-winning and bestselling author of more than 20 novels including the international blockbuster, "The Nightingale," which was named Goodreads

Best Historical Fiction and won the coveted People's Choice award for Best Fiction in 2015. "The Nightingale" is currently in production at Tri Star, with Dakota and Elle Fanning to star. "The Great Alone," published in 2018, became an instant New York Times #1 bestseller.

On Hannah's website (www.kristinhannah.com), a photo gallery depicts pictures of the kind of truck Elsa Martinelli drove to California, photos of midwestern migrants walking to California, as well as interior and exterior shots of a migrant cabin.

"The Four Winds" was a #1 New York Times bestseller, #1 USA Today bestseller, #1 Wall Street Journal bestseller and the Amazon Best Book of February 2021. Fans of John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath," Delia Owen's "Where the Crawdads Sing," and Barbara Kingsolver's "Unsheltered" will not be disappointed.

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aRt Cottage

by FROgard

MARTIN BIRO & JERRY DUNBAR ...

Twin Brothers of Different Mothers

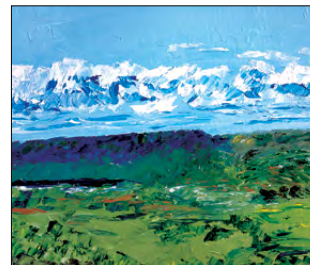
Martin Biro and Jerry Dunbar are featured in a duo exhibit for September and October at the aRt Cottage. But how can these guys be twins if they are from a different mother? What's going on here?

Martin and Jerry have known each other for years and have been best friends for a very long time. They have much in common and enjoy their "brotherhood." Jerry's family originates from Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, southeast of El Paso, Texas and he currently resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Martin is from Budapest, Hungary and currently resides in Pleasant Hill, California. Although they live miles apart, they see each other often and reconnect through making art, each in his own way. Jerry the potter and Martin the painter are twin brothers of different mothers.

Jerry is a tribal member of the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo. Having concentrated on bead and quill work for many years, he now looks forward to mastering the art of the Pueblo pottery in the tradition of his ancestors.

"Prayers and offerings are made, asking for forgiveness of our Mother, as we cut into her, gathering only what is needed and using it in a respectful way," he says.

"In traditional Pueblo beliefs, the clay itself is an entity with a spirit that's to be respected. I speak to the piece and ask it to guide me as I work with it, taking the shape and direction the clay wants."



Martin is a silversmith by profession at his family business in San Francisco, Biro and Sons. Martin studies Art and Economics at St. Mary's College and has painted all throughout his life.

"Nature and landscapes have always intrigued me, the primitive aspects of

color, light, and movement in particular. I presently work with palette knives and oil paints on canvas," he says. His growing



interest in abstract expressionism gives him a greater freedom to explore. His award-winning work has been in the California State Fair, Diablo Valley College and the aRt Cottage, among others.

Join us for Jerry's demonstration of traditional Pueblo pottery making on September 9th, 7-9 pm, and the artist reception on September 11th, 2-4pm. Both events are free and open to the public. aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. in Concord - visit artcottage.info for more details.



A WALK THROUGH TIME with Misty Bruns

Tragedy in Clayton—131 years ago

The small town of Clayton at the base of Mt Diablo was hit with a disturbing tragedy, when James and Catherine Cavagnero were found dead in bed on November 14, 1890.

The events of the life that James and Catherine lead were intertwined with assumptions and speculation.

James (Jas) was born in San Francisco on or around 1861 or 1862. At the time of his death his father and sisters were living in Vallejo and Oakland. James had been employed at the Glen Terry vineyard for two years.

Catherine was born May 8, 1870. She was raised by her aunt Mrs. Habels.

The date of death listed for Catherine is November 10, 1890. The date of death listed for James is November 14, 1890.

It is said in the newspaper articles from the Contra Costa Gazette in November 1890 that James had a disagreeable temper.

He is presented as a jealous husband who abused his wife and eventually killing her accidentally by firsthand accounts of ranch hands and prior coworkers at the coal field describing his temper.

It was first thought that this was a murder suicide. Then Contra Costa Gazette settled on it being a murder by cowards in the November 15, 1890, publication. However, it was then changed for certain to murder suicide in the November 19, 1890 publication.

James is listed as died from a slit neck, and Catherine died from strangulation. James was listed in the publication under

"Deaths".

While reading events of this tragedy from the Contra Costa Gazette, I was struck at the two articles never mentioning Catherine's name. Nor including her in the "Deaths" section of the newspaper. You would only have known who she was if you knew her aunt, Mrs. Habels.

As I continued to read these articles, I began to question, if it was a murder suicide, why did James wait four days to kill himself? Had he already killed Catherine when the ranch hand saw him at his ranch looking drunk and trying to pick a fight? Did he then slit his neck four days after killing his wife? Or were they actually murdered, and the person(s) who killed them got away with murder?

We will never know unless they speak to us from the beyond!

Catherine (Hebeisen) Cavagnero was on this earth for a short 20 years and buried at Live Oak cemetery in Concord.

James's remains were taken by the Italians and buried at Saint Catherine's cemetery in Martinez.

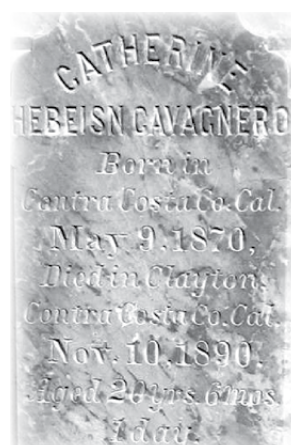


TRAGEDY AT CLAYTON

JAMES PAVAGNERO AND WIFE FOUND DEAD IN BED.

Evidence of a Brutal and Cowardly Murder.

On Friday morning the usual quiet of the town of Clayton was disturbed by the startling and terrible intelligence that Jas. Pavagnero and wife, residents of that place, had been discovered dead in bed. The coroner was sent for, and, arriving at the scene found evidence enough of a brutal and cowardly murder to justify him in notifying the Sheriff and District Attorney of the facts. Mr. Pavagnero had been employed at the Glen Terry Vineyard for the past two years, was an industrious, hard-working young man some 28 years of age, and had been married about two years. At first it was supposed that he had killed his wife and suffocated himself, but an examination as above stated exploded this theory, and the officials are now working up clues which may lead to the discovery of the assassin who perpetrated the terrible deed. The murdered man was born in San Francisco, has a father and two sisters, living at Vallejo and Oakland respectively, who have been notified of the sad affair and who were expected to arrive here last evening. What disposition will be made of the bodies of the victims is as yet unknown. Later accounts render it doubtful whether it was murder or suicide.



CLAYTON, Nov. 17, 1890.
ED. GAZETTE:—The theory in regard to the late tragedy at Clayton, that the parties were murdered by some unknown assassin, is generally regarded here as absurd. The husband, Mr. Pavagnero, was an Italian. His wife was quite young and good looking, was of German descent and a niece of Mrs. Habels, who had brought her up from infancy. She was a most excellent and industrious girl, of a good disposition and worthy of a good husband. Her husband was insanely jealous of her without any good reason, and quarreled with some of the men on the ranch, instigated thereto by his unjust suspicions. A young man who was at the ranch the day before the tragedy, says that he appeared to be pretty full of new wine and tried to pick a quarrel with him, but did not succeed. Reports say, and it is generally believed, that he had often abused his wife, and had beaten her at times. Another reliable man who knew him at the coal mines for several years, says that he was regarded there as a turbulent and dangerous man. He knew of his being in several rows, in one or two of which he drew a knife. The marks on the face of the wife showed that she had been pounded and scratched. The general belief here is that in a fit of jealous rage he pounded and choked her to death, but probably did not intend to kill her, but finding that he had done so, was alarmed, and so took his own life by cutting his throat. This was done so effectually and in such a way as to leave little doubt of its being a clear case of suicide on his part, after the murder of his wife. It is denied by some that he was under the influence of intoxicants, as Mr. Terry does not allow his men to get drunk. But everybody knows that any man at work around a winery and distillery can find ways enough to get all he wants.

Much sympathy is felt here for Mrs. Habels, her aunt, who was overwhelmed with grief at the terrible shock. The funeral of the deceased wife took place at the church in Clayton, and was largely attended by sympathizing friends. Rev. Mr. Hall officiated. The husband was taken charge of by the Italians, and was buried at Martinez.

Tight 'Hammies'? Try Breathing!

By Carmela Lieras, NASM-CPT



Anytime someone tells me their muscles are tight, I immediately think "You have a nervous system issue, and not a muscle issue." The nervous system controls everything from breathing, heart rate, emotions, thoughts, digestive function, muscular tension and so much more.

Your muscles are not constantly tight on purpose. After years of stretching, how much improvement in flexibility have you gained? Stretching here and there can have a positive effect on your tight muscles, but has the stretching made a significant impact on your flexibility that lasts?

Breathing has a role in reducing muscle tightness. Lack of proper respiration can make stressful days seem never-ending. When your body is constantly stressed, your sympathetic ("fight or flight") nervous system takes over to protect you. This results in tense muscles, increased heart rate and respiration, perspiration, and dilated pupils.

So, how do we tell our brain everything is ok and encourage it to relax? By focusing on deep breathing, and specifically exhalation. Long, slow exhalations trigger the parasympathetic nervous system (our "rest and digest" system) to calm the body down. Adding in a focused, timed, breathing session into

your day can work wonders for your muscle tightness and overall stress levels.

Try this at home. Start by testing your muscles to get a feel for how tight they are in that moment. If it is your hamstrings, do a few forward bends (toe touches.) If it's your neck that is stiff, turn your head left to right a few times, then look up and down a few times.

Sit in a chair or lay on the floor with your knees bent and no excessive arch in your low back. If necessary, place a small pillow under your head for comfort. Close your eyes. Place one hand on your belly and the other on your upper chest. Close your mouth and inhale through your nose, trying to make the hand on your belly rise first. The hand on your chest should rise after. Aim for a 2-3 second inhale.

Then slightly open your mouth as if you're breathing into a straw and exhale for at least 5-6 seconds, longer even better. Repeat this sequence for 10-15 repetitions or before you start, set a timer for 2 minutes. Try to add 30 seconds to 1-minute each day until you can do this for more than 5 minutes.

Now, retest your tight muscles and see if they feel any looser!

I can say with confidence you will likely experience relief with your tightness for the better. Incorporate this into your day as much as you can to realize lasting change.

MDUSD changing teacher assignments due to spike in remote learning

Mt. Diablo Unified School District is changing teacher assignments at elementary schools because of a recent increase in students enrolling in the district's remote learning program as COVID-19 cases have also spiked amid the more contagious delta variant of COVID-19, Superintendent Adam Clark said.

In a letter to the district community, Clark said the number of people enrolling in its independent study program has swelled along with the number of COVID cases reported recently.

Before Aug. 11, about 150 students were enrolled in the program, but nearly 500 more have transferred since then from in-person instruction to the remote program.

As a result, some elementary school classes are merging and some teachers will move to independent study instruction, Clark said.

The newly formed classes will not exceed limits set in the teachers' union contracts, he said.

"I completely understand the frustration, concerns and disappointment that families and teachers are feeling as these shifts take place and I am truly sorry this is so upsetting," Clark said.

"We are moving teachers to follow the kids. I understand that this shift will cause a disruption, but this is a common occurrence in districts throughout the state as they adjust to actual classroom enrollment after the school year begins," he said.

The district is updating its COVID cases reported at each campus at this link. Within the past 10 days, 51 people, including both students and staff, have tested positive for COVID in the MDUSD.

The Superintendent's message regarding teacher assignments stated:

Dear Mt. Diablo Unified School District Community:

In the past month, we have experienced a substantial increase in students enrolling in the District's Independent Study program. This has caused us to be overstaffed at elementary schools and understaffed in Independent Study. Therefore, we are collapsing several elementary school classes and moving teachers to serve students based on class sizes established in our teachers' union contract.

The newly formed classes do not exceed contracted class size limits, which are:

TK-K (All Day-360 minutes): 27
TK: 32

K: 32
1-3: 31
TK-3 Combination: 30
4-5: 34
4-5 Combination: 31
6-12: 37
English: 33
Physical Education (K-12): 45
Choral Music: 45
Instrumental Music: 45

As a District, we have been directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education and State agencies to live within our means financially. Therefore, we cannot hire more teachers for Independent Study, while allowing educators at elementary schools to teach classes that are only partially full.

Here is a link (referring to Fiscal Health Risk Analysis, July 29, 2021) to a report on MDUSD's financial situation that warns we must make tough decisions to stay within our budget now in order to continue to serve all of our students and families in the future. This document was shared at our August 11th Board meeting.

I am confident that our teachers will continue to deliver high-quality instruction and that our students will be resilient and safe.

We have strict mask guidance in place. Merv-13 air filters are in every classroom, and we have made optional COVID testing available throughout the District for students, staff and their immediate families.

We are following all county and state COVID safety guidelines.

I know that there are some who are still uneasy, but we are placing our talented staff where our students need them most.

Adam Clark, Ed.D., Superintendent





Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

By Jill Hedgecock

Genesis

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

Genesis (Annie) is a super sweet, 1.5 year, 11 lb. chihuahua terrier mix. Underdog Rescue adopted her from a rural central valley shelter. She was likely hit by a car as a stray and came in with a mangled left rear leg that required amputation. Genesis may be a tripod, but that does not slow her down much. However, she will need a home without too many stairs and easy outdoor access. She loves her foster families other dogs. Genesis has stranger danger, but with patience, she will become your best companion dog ever.

Genesis is:

- Dog and cat friendly
- Slower to warm up to new people
- Housebroken
- Best suited in a home with older children



Genesis' ideal situation is a quiet home with a doggy sibling and a patient doggy parent(s). Her adoption fee is \$250. If you're ready to adopt this sweet girl, contact Underdog at adopt@underdogca.com.

Genesis is being fostered through Underdog Rescue. Underdog is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Underdog's mission is to save shelter dogs that are out of time or that require rehabilitation prior to adoption. Underdog relies on donations and maintains a wish list with Amazon.

Bone to Pick

September 18th is Puppy Mill Awareness Day. Puppy mill dogs are often forced to live in small cages, sometimes at the legal limit of only six inches larger than the dog on all sides. Female dogs are bred constantly, often for their entire lives.

It is legal for licensed breeders to own 1,000 or more dogs. Even though social bonding is as necessary for a dog's quality of life as food, water and shelter, these caged puppy mill breeders are denied this fundamental need.

To avoid buying a puppy mill dog, watch for these red flags:

Beware of any ads that list several breeds for sale.

Avoid purchasing a puppy if the breeder will not let you visit.

Also, be aware that nearly all pet stores that sell puppies are supplied by mills. Instead, if you want a purebred, find a reputable breeder in your area or contact breed-specific rescues.

September 23th is Remember Me Thursday®.

"Over a million beautiful, adoptable pets will lose their lives in 2021," states Mike Arms, President and CEO of Helen Woodward Animal Center. This media awareness day remembers those pets who never got that second chance. If you adopted a rescue dog, share a photo using #RememberMeThursday.

Pawsitive News

The Third Week of September is Adopt a Less Adoptable Pet Week. This week spotlights shelter and rescue pets that have a very difficult time being adopted. Won't you consider adopting a special needs dog with medical requirements, a senior pet, a shy dog, or species that are hard to place like chihuahuas or pit bulls?

Want to take Fido with you to get a beer in Concord? If you are into craft beer, Dogtrekker.com lists dog-friendly brew options to include, Eureka!, Lazy Dog Restaurant, Concord Tap House, Epidemic Ales or Hop Grenade Taproom & Bottleshop are other dog-friendly places. However, given the ever-changing COVID rules, it is recommended that you call first before showing up with your pooch.

[Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's international social media celebrity with more than 195K followers at Instagram. [com/rubydooby_do](https://www.instagram.com/rubydooby_do), 130K Facebook followers, and 1.6 M TikTok followers. Special thanks to Jill Hedgecock, author of "Between Shadow's Eyes" and "From Shadow's Perspective" whose book covers feature Ruby. www.jillhedgecock.com.



It's Great to be Back!

By Dave Fehte, Interim Executive Director, Clayton Valley Charter High

Clayton Valley Charter High School is excited to welcome our new and returning students, teachers and staff for the 2021-22 school year. The Ugly Eagles are poised for another exciting and promising school year as we return to campus for full-time, in-person learning since March 2020. It's a great, positive environment when everyone is here at CVCHS and we are all fortunate to be back in classrooms.

Traditionally, Back to School month is unique and this year was no exception. Because of COVID-19 protocols, our students have experienced most of the Fall semester activities with a few alterations. For example, Sarah Lovick and her awesome Link Crew hosted our Week of Welcome, a new student transition program. This experience provided incoming students with activities and mentors designed to prepare them for their high school experience. CVCHS also hosted our Back-to-School Dance which was held outdoors in the Upper Quad. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the start of the school year with friends, play organized games and dance to some great music.

Returning to campus was no simple feat. I am grateful to our governing board, teachers and staff who made the commitment to good health and the necessary safeguards to welcome back our students. The CVCHS COVID-19 Safety Plan is in place and addresses our situation with vaccinations, masks, distancing and case reporting. This document is updated frequently as policies and guidance from the California Department of Public Health and Contra Costa County Health Services make adjustments. We will continue to keep our families updated and remain steadfast ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

CVCHS is also excited to welcome our new

school nurse, Nelly Wong. As a liaison and resource to families, staff and health officials, Nelly is CVCHS' frontline for keeping students healthy and providing emergency nursing services. She graduated from University of California-Berkeley with a Bachelor of Science in Microbial Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Research College

of Nursing. She received her Doctor of Medicine degree from American University of Integrative Science and Master of Public Health from University of New England. As a medical school graduate, Nelly has diverse experiences in hands-on clinical skills as well as training for acute care, preventative medicine, health maintenance, chronic disease management and patient education. With such an impressive pedigree,

I'd say CVCHS students are in good hands with Nelly.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our dedicated kitchen staff. This year, due to funding allocated by the federal government,

all students will receive their school lunches for free. This is a huge undertaking, and our kitchen staff continues to prepare delicious and nutritious meals each day. Studies show that students who are eating healthy daily get better grades, have fewer absences and less behavioral issues in the classroom. Plus, the Chicken Cesar Salad is reason alone to stand in line. It's the bomb!

As we prepare to embark on another academic year, I look forward to partnering with our entire school community to make every student's learning experience the very best here at CVCHS. Whether you are new or a returning family, we welcome you as part of the Ugly Eagle family and look forward to seeing you at next month's Back to School Night. On behalf of the CVCHS administration team, teachers and staff, it's good to be back!



Ruby tapped for Lagunitas Beer

You may have seen our beloved Ruby on social media for International Dog Day, August 26. Concord's very own canine celebrity doberman was tapped by Lagunitas Beer to do a short social media stint to run on that day with her master photographer Charles Lindsey. Ruby is now on the short list of celebrity dogs selling beer. Those old enough will remember Bull Terrier Spuds MacKenzie (Bud Light), and Golden Retriever/Irish Setter mix, Alex (Stroh's) TV ads.

Lagunitas is not Ruby's first commercial work, though. In addition to helping promote local rescue centers, and pose for covers of two novels by local author Jill Hedgecock, she has also completed social campaigns for Miele vacuums, Spot & Tango dog food, and is currently involved in a cam-

paign for Truepanion Medical Insurance for Pets. Ruby now has an agent.

Lindsey's photography expertise and savvy social media skills is responsible for Ruby's Online popularity. Last month her

Facebook posts reached nearly 2 million apparent dog lovers. Lindsey says while the money has been a nice bonus, his real goal was to destigmatize the negativity surrounding the doberman breed perpetuated by Hollywood's portrayal of them.

Ruby's videos demonstrate how gentle, smart and sweet doberman's are. Check her out at Instagram.com/rubydooby_do, Facebook.com/Rubydoobydoberman and followers, and tiktok.com/@rubydooby_do.



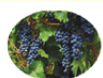
Ruby pours her master a Lagunitas IPA on International Dog Day. Photo by Charles Lindsey Photography.

Word Search Solution

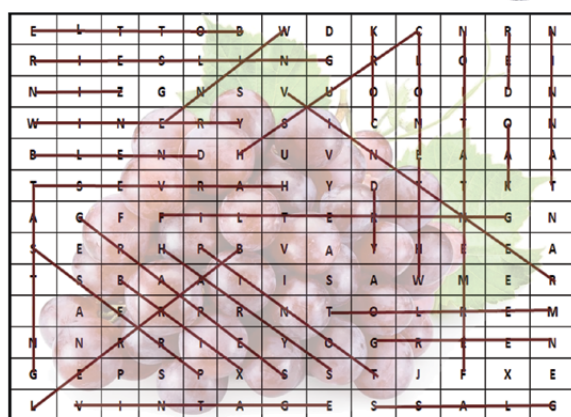
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Photo courtesy Vinovest



HARVEST TIME!



Thanks for reading the Diablo Gazette