

The Diablo Gazette

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

DECEMBER 2022

Art Comes To Life

Volunteer cast members are adorned in elaborate costumes and detailed makeup for "The Story in Art" Christmas production at Northcreek Church in Walnut Creek.

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Book Reviews, Holiday Recipes, Movie and Book Reviews, Events and more...

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Concord First Partners' CNWS Development Term Sheet Reveals a Few Surprises

The delayed and long awaited Term Sheet the City of Concord has required of its chosen master developer, Concord First Partners (CFP), for the development of the Concord Naval Weapons Station is being presented to the community and will be voted on by the City Council at a special council meeting on Saturday, January 7, 2023.

This is the biggest land development in the Bay Area - a roughly \$6 billion dollar project. The term sheet is a conceptual estimate of residential and commercial densities as well as a conceptual and reasonable assumption of financial feasibility. It is a vision and a development road map so that the US Navy will transfer the 2300 acres of land to the City after the Navy's clean-up of the area.

The term sheet was originally due in May of 2022. CFP was granted two extensions to complete the term sheet and at one point in August had threatened to pull out claiming it was not an economically viable project for them.

However, at the December 1 meeting at the Concord Senior Center, Concord First Partners presented some surprises beyond the original expectations including a plan to build 15,595 homes, 3,300 more homes than the original plan.

City staff has recommended approving the non-binding document and its conditions for a future sale and development agreement. Here are some of its highlights.

This plan calls for a five-phase development, to be completed over 40 years, which would build 15,595 homes, create an estimated 16, 920 jobs, and 6 million square feet of commercial space while restoring Mount Diablo Creek.

Concord First has partnered with Related California to build affordable housing. They have agreed to use union labor to build 3,020 affordable homes for low-income households defined as those earning 80 percent of area median income or below.

CFP will provide Affordable Housing "Development Ready" pads which they contend equates to a contribution of \$187 million in infrastructure. The plan has included 879 Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADU). These are attached mini homes that the property owner would lease at the affordable housing rate.

Also, it has pledged \$50 million to affordable housing projects in Concord, \$100 million toward a Tournament Sports Park/Citywide park and \$65 million toward a Community Center/Library.

The first phase will consist of 2,873 new homes, of which 693 would be affordable,



Director, Economic Development and Base Reuse for City of Concord, Concord First Partner's Jeb Elmore, Vice President-Acquisitions, Lewis Concord Member, LLC, and Project Planner, Brian Jencek of HOK present the Term Sheet overview at the Concord Senior Center, on December 1.

on 423 acres. It would also feature 80 acres of parks and greenways. This is part of the first 1400 acres the Navy is expected to be approved by the US Navy for transfer to the city by next year. The developer will be expected to reach certain milestones to continue on the remainder of the land to be transferred.

The plan also states that at least 50% of market-rate residential is to be sold to unaffiliated third parties but prioritized to local builders.

The development partnership seeks an 18-percent return on its investment, according to the term sheet, slightly lower than the previous master developer threshold of 20 percent.

The selection of Concord First Partners as Master Developer was controversial. Discovery Builders, has a 45% stake in the consortium and is owned by the Seeno family, who has a history of environmental and other legal violations.

The deliverable of local union jobs, residential and commercial development, affordable housing and community benefits were required no matter which developer was chosen.

On paper, their Term Sheet presents an exciting vision complete with renderings and photos of the proposed development.

While most of us will not be around at its projected 40-year completion, your understanding of the project, including its risks and benefits is important. Your input is necessary to properly guide the city council on how to move forward. There are many details still to be defined and questions to be answered, some of which can only be resolved as the development proceeds.

The December 1 presentation was only lightly attended but it can be watched online at concordreusproject.org. The next presentation is on December 15, at 6:00 p.m. at the Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle.

Will council give CFP the nod to move forward?

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Tournament Sports Park

Neighborhood-Serving Retail

Delta-De Anza interim trail connection

VILLAGE CENTERS

This Village Center is one of the many renderings proposed in a presentation to the community by Concord First Partners.

Celebrate the Holidays and New Year with Us!

Join Our Countdown to New Year's Party!

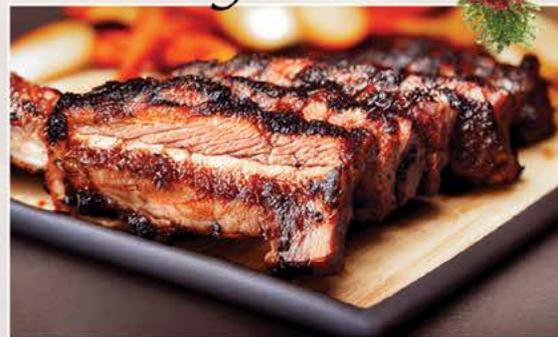
MENU

Christmas Menu \$60 pp

- Zuppa • Salad
- Choice of Entrées includes
- Fiore Ravioli
- Pork Tenderloin
- Short Ribs • Halibut
- Carbonara
- and Dessert

New Year Menu \$70 pp

- Asparagi • Starter Choice of
- Seafood Chowder or • Citrus Beet Salad
- Choice of Entrées includes
- Scampi Risotto
- Pork Ossobuco
- Lobster Ravioli
- Moroccan Chicken
- Pasta Carbonara
- Short Ribs
- Dolci~Choice of Chocolate Cake or Wild Berry Cake



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aRt Cottage Original Work Featured in aRt Cottage's 11th Annual Holiday Boutique

aRt Cottage is hosting our 11th Annual Holiday Boutique from December 7 through January 6 featuring original work from a wide variety of local artists and crafters. We have something unique and handmade to suit any holiday shopping budget, from \$5 to \$500. Gift ideas include silver jewelry, crocheted ponchos, miniature mosaic necklaces, pet beds, silk scarves, paintings, soaps and so much more.



shows are not juried, which means all work that is submitted will be exhibited, space permitting. Visit the Artist submissions page on our website to learn more.

Our mission is to support all artists who wish to exhibit their work from professionals, hobbyists to brand-new beginners. There is no greater accomplishment for any artist than to have someone love their work enough to purchase it and bring it home.

We would like to thank all the participating artists, art students, the musical and catering support teams at our receptions, groundskeepers, docents, curators, community leaders and everyone who visited our gallery this past year. We are grateful for your encouragement and enthusiasm.

Everyone is welcome to meet and mingle with the artists on Saturday, December 10th (2-4pm) at our Artist Reception. Learn more about their creative techniques, tour our ceramic studio and enjoy our garden sculptures. We love it when you shop small and shop locally. Besides, there is nothing better than filling your home with original art and craft.

We are kicking off 2023 with an open call for local artists to submit work for our popular annual "All Creatures Great and Small" exhibit that runs January through February. We are excited to show off a menagerie of animal-themed paintings, sculpture and photography. Our



These are truly giving people who make aRt Cottage what it really is, our cottage.

The aRt Cottage's gallery and gift shop is open Wednesday through Saturday (11am-5pm) at 2238 Mount Diablo Street in downtown Concord. Visit artcottage.info for details.

Christmas for Everyone Offers Free Meal and Gifts

Christmas for Everyone (CFE) has helped thousands of people in our communities celebrate Christmas. These are often working families that do not have the extra resources for gifts or even a Christmas dinner.

CFE is a non-profit group that for the past 38 years has sought out financial sponsors and donations from the public for toys for kids, blankets, jackets, clothing, appliances sleeping bags and the like including gently used clothing.

Each year, they transform a local church center into a "shopping mall" where families can come and choose items for their families, have a complete Christmas dinner, listen to live Christmas music, get haircuts, enjoy a play center created for their kids and feel that they and their families have celebrated Christmas. Last year, CFE served Christmas dinner to over 1,200 people.



Dinners are served in person on Christmas Day for families to enjoy

With COVID under control, CFE has again regrouped and changed the way they have done things in the past. Here are the primary changes and how you can help:

CFE will be serving dinners in person on Christmas Day. Can you volunteer to prep and prepare food?

Volunteers will package and deliver home-bound meals to the elderly and those unable to leave their homes. Can you volunteer for this?

Families can come to the Light of Grace Korean Presbyterian Church in Martinez (distribution and work site) Christmas day to "shop" for gently used clothing and coats.

Can you donate your gently used clothing, sort clothing or assist when the families come to shop?

Please donate new toys for children of all ages, especially teenagers. Donate cash for the food (desperately needed), purchase warm socks, coats, gloves, or lap blankets.

The Light of Grace Korean Presbyterian Church is located at: 68 Morello Avenue, Martinez. Starting December 7, donations can be made Monday-Saturday between 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sundays from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. You may contact the CFE Director Mary Breshears-Perez at (925) 228-2233 to volunteer or get more information.

Check the website or Facebook page for more information.
www.christmasforeveryone.com

Former Clayton Mayor Howard Geller and his wife Debbie have been involved with CFE for 25 years. "Debbie and I will once again accept donations at

our home and deliver those items to the Martinez distribution church. Our address is: 252 Mountaire Pkwy, Clayton (Dana Hills). Please leave your donations on our front porch or checks in one of our locked mailboxes." Reach Geller by phone at 925-323-4913 if you have any questions.

For those who wish to make a monetary donation, make checks payable to Christmas for Everyone. (Non-Profit #46-4947045). Mail checks to: CFE - 391 Taylor Blvd., #140, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. If you have the time, get involved. It will make this Christmas one that you will not forget.

"We want to thank those that have donated in the past to this great cause and thank those of you that will make donations this year," say the Gellers.



"Christmas For Everyone"
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FREE: Enjoy a Traditional Christmas meal of turkey, ham & all the sides. A new gift, shop for gently used clothing, entertainment, haircuts & much more.

Your children will have fun participating in our many activities, listening to music, face painting and more.

Our dinner of ham, turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, deserts, and more is the best.

Transportation will be available door to door or from local pick-up points in Martinez, Concord, and Pittsburg as well as your home. Volunteers will visit and bring food and a gift to the homebound upon request.

Christmas For Everyone (CFE), a 38-year-old volunteer organization is grateful to the LIGHT OF GRACE KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. We are dedicated to sharing this joyous holiday with those who may be without family or funds to do so on their own.

Please call (925) 228-2233 for more information
WEB: CHRISTMASFOREVERYONE.COM
EMAIL: CFE_CHRISTMAS@COMCAST.NET
FACE BOOK: CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYONE

BECAUSE OF ANIMAL ALLERGIES, INSURANCES & HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN PRESENT WE DO NOT ALLOW ANIMALS ON CHRISTMAS DAY



Corporate Sponsors are feeling the "crunch", making every small donation even that much more important. The Clayton Business Community Association (CBCA) donated \$5,000 from revenues raised from its Art and Wine Festival and other downtown events.



Jennifer Stojanovich
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

Be a Santa to a Senior

While we are focusing on all we're thankful for, we recognize that there are many who could use a little help this holiday season.

The "Be a Santa to a Senior" program has helped provide more than two million gifts to over 750,000 seniors in North America over the last two decades. The program delivers gifts, but more importantly, reminds older adults that someone is thinking of them.

Our office will be adopting seniors at the Stonebrook Healthcare Center in Concord. If you would like to be assigned a senior to adopt this holiday season, please contact our office and we will provide you with the name and wish list for an elderly member in our community.

You can email: betterhomesasst@yahoo.com or stop by our office at 6160 Center St, Ste E in Clayton to pick an ornament with a senior's name. All donations will be due by December 19, 2022.

For more information about "Be a Santa to a Senior" please visit their website at: www.beasantoasenior.com

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Brokers Jennifer Stojanovich and George Vujnovich at Better Homes Realty of Clayton (925)567-6170.

Happy Holidays!

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Hosting Guests During the Holidays

We are feeling big holiday vibes at Visit Concord and are ready to share that joy with you and your holiday guests. Plan your holiday merriment with these ideas for exploring and celebrating our town with your family and friends.

Stay And Play In Concord

Family and friends visiting Concord for the holidays are in for a terrific time. Concord hotels have deals and accommodations for every budget. Visit Concord has created Stay and Play packages that include gift cards, merchandise and more. Go to our website for all the details. Visitconcord.com/hotels/specials-deals/stay-play-hotel-packages/.



Create new family traditions with your guests filled with Instagram-able moments. Gather around the gorgeous lit Christmas Tree in Todos Santos Plaza, enjoy ice skating at The Veranda, go shopping and dine out at your favorite Concord restaurants. Journey to the past at the new Concord History Museum, open the first and third Sundays of the month from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

Trails and Tours

Another great activity for family, friends and guests are the many self-guided walking trails and tours Concord offers. The Concord Historical Walk takes you through early Todos Santos including the home of jazz great Dave Brubeck, Concord's first firehouse and the home of founder Don Salvio Pacheco. There are over 30 stops, each with terrific architectural and historical stories to share.

Concord's Mural Tour is a new experience to share. Created and installed this past summer by talented artists, this tour makes for a pleasant artistic stroll around town.

Concord is also the home for approximately 175 Eichler homes designed by architect Joseph Eichler, a post-war real estate developer inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. These homes stand out with their signature glass facades,

clean modern lines, strong natural light, and their serene connection with nature.

Or, speaking of nature, would your guests prefer an escape from the busy holiday season? Take them on a walk on one of Concord's many local park trails. Explore and enjoy the beauty of the Iron Horse Trail, Contra Costa Canal Trail, or the open space of Lime Ridge. Or hike the trails of Mount Diablo State Park capturing its amazing vistas along the way.

Give at the Concord Visitor Center

Should the Holidays activities arouse that giving spirit, we are making it easy for you to exercise your generosity at the Concord Visitor Center to support the Family Giving Tree and The Food Bank of Contra Costa County.

Family Giving Tree provides gifts for children, adults, and seniors throughout the Bay Area, including programs in Concord. The Food Bank of Contra Costa has seen a significant rise in requests for food and looks to us for support. Stop by the Concord Visitor Center to donate either an unwrapped gift or food item. It is the best way to start your holidays. Come by any weekday from 10am to 4pm to donate a gift or food item. That will mean a lot to our community.

Concord's Comfort Food Month

On January 1, Visit Concord kicks off Concord Comfort Food Month. This is where you will enjoy dining all throughout Concord with special discounts and offers at each participating location.

For more on any of the above visit our website at www.visitconcordca.com. Follow us on Visit Concord social media for updates on Concord holiday events and Comfort Food Month.

Come by the Concord Visitor Center, 2151 Salvio Street, Suite T in Concord. We would love to meet you. Or Contact us at info@visitconcord.com or 925-685-1182 for more ideas and local information.

In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

BART Future Dependent on Increased Public Funding

Cutting BART service enough to shore up its projected nine-figure annual deficits in the coming years would result in a "death spiral" for the transit agency, according to BART planning officials.

BART planning officials prepared a five-year financial outlook to estimate how three levels of post-pandemic ridership recovery would affect service.

A full return to the transit system's pre-pandemic ridership levels would enable BART to balance its budget each year.

Recapturing 85 percent of its pre-pandemic revenue by the 2028 fiscal year would result in annual deficits of \$125 million.

If fare revenue remains stagnant through mid-2029 when the 2028 fiscal year ends, those deficits are projected to climb to \$233 million per year.

According to BART financial planning director Michael Eiseman, the cuts necessary to at least meet the annual deficits with stagnant fare revenue would eliminate service on the Richmond-Millbrae and San Jose-Daly City lines, close nine stations, reduce service to weekdays only and limit trains to arriving once every hour.

"Critically, this poor service would lead to further loss of ridership fare revenue and further deterioration of our fiscal position," Eiseman said to the BART Board of Directors.

BART officials were quick to stress that the agency is not considering cutting service or eliminating train routes at this time.

Transit officials across the region have already floated ideas to save transit agencies, including a ballot measure for a regional tax and identifying consistent state or federal funding. BART is set to exhaust its federal relief funding by mid-2025.

A New Home in Concord in 1961 for as Much as a Used Car In 2022

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to
\$16,250

Claycord.com Online Museum - An ad from 1961 for the Clayton Valley Highlands (State Streets) in Concord suggests you could get a newly built home with a 7,000-square-foot lot for as low as \$14,250. Adjusted for inflation, \$14,250 in 1961 is equal to \$133,320 in 2022. However, these 60-year-old homes are now selling for \$800,000 - \$1.1M.

(information from DollarTimes.com and Zillow.com).

The Nightmare Before Christmas House and other Lighted Homes



The Nightmare Before Christmas house is up and running for the 17th year in a row at 876 St. John circle in Concord. The house features synchronized lights, music, fog and snow. It starts at 5:30 every night. Tune your radio to 107.9 as you arrive. It is always a treat to visit this

house during Christmastime.

Other homes to see: 1094 Discovery Way, Concord, 1728 Elmhurst Lane, Concord, 3812 Maplewood Dr, Concord, 4549 Lincoln Dr, Concord, 5390 Aspenwood Ct, Concord, 140 Lance Ct, Martinez, 190 Escondido Dr, Martinez. Other popular decorations include Mountaire Parkway and Emory Court in Clayton, Kings Valley Christian School on Clayton Road in Concord, and Discovery Way in Concord. For a growing list of decorated homes, go to <http://californiachristmaslights.com/>.

Bay Area Air District Offering Buy-Back Program for Older Vehicles

Bay Area residents with a vehicle made before 1999 can receive up to \$1,200 as part of a buy-back program to improve local air quality, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District announced.

To qualify for the program, vehicles must be the 1998 model year or older, registered in the Bay Area for the last 24 months and currently drivable. Vehicles must also be smog certified.

More information about the buy-back program can be found at <https://www.baaqmd.gov/funding-and-incentives/residents/vehicle-buy-back-program>.

Gas Line Fire Alarms Downtown Concord



On Nov. 16, 2022, at about 10:30 a.m., a construction crew contracted by the City of Concord to conduct repaving work on Grant and East streets hit a 4-inch gas line causing it to ignite. The fire soon engulfed the pavement grinder, but the operator was able to escape quickly and was unharmed.

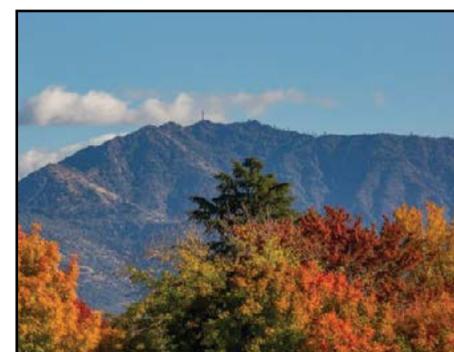
Contra Costa Fire Protection District crews and Concord Police Department officers immediately closed the roads but the fire could not be extinguished until PG&E crews were able to pinch off the corresponding gas lines.

PG&E was able to halt the gas flow to the line at about 12:30 p.m. enabling fire crews to extinguish the fire. Following extensive cleanup and PG&E's work to replace the broken pipe, the roads were fully reopened by 9 a.m. on Nov. 17.

After a review of safety protocols, PG&E and the contractor re-marked all of the underground utilities in the area and the contractor was allowed to return to work on Nov. 19.

The City is working with the contractor to determine the root cause to ensure this type of incident does not happen in the future. concord-residential-drop-off-event.

The Beautiful Fall Colors of Mt. Diablo



It sure is beautiful in our neck of the woods if you just take the time to look. Photo courtesy of SchofieldImages.com and Claycord.com.

For more local stories visit Claycord.com.



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Publisher's Notes
By David King

My Dinner with a Star Wars Ewok

One of the most memorable characters of the Star Wars saga were the Ewoks, the adorable fighting teddy bears in "Return of the Jedi".

Being a devout Star Wars fan back in the day, and maybe still today, I was thrilled to meet up and have dinner with an Ewok in downtown Concord.

American actor Kevin Thompson was in town as one of the featured stars at the Mouse-con event at the Concord Plaza Hotel. At 4 foot 5 inches, Thompson is the biggest star I have ever had the privilege to take to dinner. It so happens that Thompson was a childhood playmate of my neighbor who ironically towers at 6 foot 3 inches. The three of us wine and dined at Lunas Restaurant while we discussed his book "My Journey to Endor", which was co-written by his wife, Tracey McCoy Thompson.

Not much is known about Ewoks until now, thanks to Thompson's book. He was an Ewok stuntman. You saw him swinging on vines, battling Storm Troopers, and dodging or succumbing to explosions.

Ewoks in Star Wars were named after the Native American Bay Area Miwok tribe. The Miwok's lived in the redwood forest that is the setting for the Endor scenes on "Return of the Jedi."

While most Ewoks were extras of children and little people, Thompson was one of five actors who did all the stunts in the forest. He attributes this opportunity to his wrestling and gymnastics days growing up.



Habib Eljacifi, Owner/Chef of Luna's Restaurant (right), and his father Abderrahman Eljacifi pose with Ewok stuntman, Kevin Thompson.

Thompson is a fabulous storyteller, and the book walks you through his entire journey from the secretive audition to all the difficult stunts, some dangerous.

They were difficult because the Ewok costumes were hot, stuffed with foam padding so much so that it took a crew to put them on and take them off the actors. But even more uncomfortable, all stunts had to be done blind, as they could not see out of the heads. Naturally, that sets up for some very amusing chapters of stunt production fails, falls, and triumphs.

In the process of learning the life of an Ewok actor, you will also learn many of the production techniques in the making of the movie. Days are spent on stunts to capture a few seconds of movie magic. It's a bit like discovering the secret of a magician's trick.

There is no doubt that after reading this book you will be inclined to

rewatch "Return of the Jedi" but with the knowledge of what went on behind the scenes.

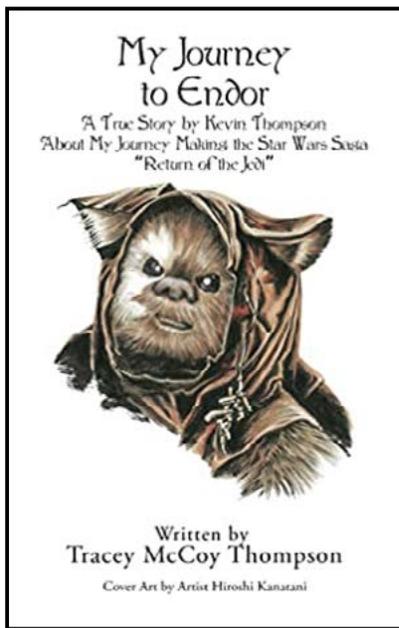
One of the topics we discussed at dinner was the decline of the use of little people in the movie industry. Now producers are resorting to using computer-generated imagery (CGI) to "shrink" actors into little people. Not one dwarf was hired for the upcoming movie Snow White.

One fascinating tidbit I learned, because Thompson was a stuntman and not an extra, he fortunately was able to negotiate royalties in his contract with George Lucas.

"My Journey to Endor" is a fun read, full of amusing anecdotes, and a wonderful keepsake for any Star Wars fan. And, oh look, it's the holidays.

By the way, are you wondering what an Ewok eats? A big plate of lasagna.

("My Journey to Endor" 212 pages. Amazon Books: Hardback \$27.89. Paperback \$15.04, Kindle \$5.99).



Happy Holidays!

Hanukkah Community Celebration



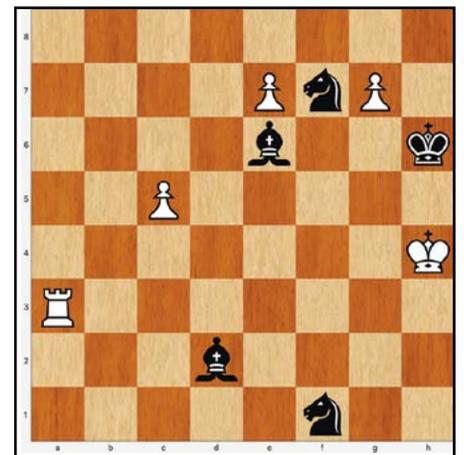
Sunday, Dec. 18 - Monday, Dec. 26
Congregation B' nai Shalom and Downtown Martinez & Co. present the Annual Hanukkah Community Celebration. Traditional lighting of the menorah will be done every evening at dusk at the Main Street Plaza, Martinez. On Dec. 18th from 4:45pm - 6pm, light the menorah and celebrate with music, sufganiyot, and family fun.



In this month's puzzle, I methodically tried to put White's King in grave danger but gave him dynamic ways to avoid checkmate.

White to play and draw.

[Hint: The first move is key!]



SOLUTION

5.Rg3!!
Stopping Be1++ in a sacrificial manner.
A: 5.g8=Q? Be1+ 6.Rg3 Nxf3 7.Qf8+ Kg6 8.Qg8+ Kf6 9.e8=N+ Ke7 10.Qxg3 Bxg3+ 11.Kxg3 Kxe8-+
B: 5.g8=N+? Kg6 6.Rg3+ Nxf3 7.e8=Q 7.Kxg3 Bd7-+ 7..Nf5+ 8.Kg4 Ng7 9.Qxe6+ Nxe6-+ 5...Bg5+
A: 5...Nxf3 6.Kxf3! Black cannot stop the e and g pawns at the same time. 6...Kxf3 7.e8=Q= Three pieces vs. Queen and pawn is dynamically balanced. It should be a draw.
B: 5...Be1+- 6.g8=N+!+- 6.Rxg5 Nxf3
Black is threatening Nf3++, but White has a way to make a crucial check.
7.g8=N+! Kg7 8.Kxg5= 8.e8=Q?? Nf3+ 9.Kh5 Ng3#

Pacific Service Credit Union Surprises Local Organizations

On Tuesday, November 29, Pacific Service Credit Union (Pacific Service CU), visited local community organizations with charitable donations in honor of Giving Tuesday, a global movement that celebrates the generosity of giving back. The Pacific Service CU surprised organizations located in Concord including Youth Homes, Bay Area Crisis Nursery, The Salvation Army, Shelter Inc., Stand!, For Families Free of Violence, and CocoKids.

"At Pacific Service Credit Union, we are committed to giving back to the communities we serve and being a good corporate citizen. The credit union industry philosophy is one of people helping people that extends beyond serving our members to serving our communities in need," said Kristin Peterson, assistant vice president, business, and community development.

"This Giving Tuesday, we were able to surprise a few of our community partners with a little something extra to assist their clients throughout the holiday season. The donations will provide assistance to those in need in our community who may not have been able to put a gift under the tree or a meal on their table. It's what we do at Pacific Service Credit Union - we put people before profits," said Peterson.

For the past seven years, Pacific Service Credit Union has been ranked by the San Francisco Business Times for corporate philanthropy, joining only a handful of companies that donate more than 2% of their net earnings to charities located in the communities they serve.



Kristin Peterson Right surprises Salvation Army with a large donation.

Pacific Service Credit Union was founded in 1936 by Pacific Gas & Electric Company employees. Eight-six years later it now has over 67,000 members. Pacific Service CU serves anyone who lives, works, worships, or attends school in Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Marin, Napa, Placer, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties.



It seems like I have been inspired by my mom a lot this year, which is appropriate since she was my first culinary instructor. My mother's homeland is Hungary, just over the board from Austria.

Smoked fish is perfect with the great grape of Austria, Grüener Veltliner (grew-ner velt-lee-ner). Grüener has searing acidity with citrus and white pepper notes. It is similar to Sauvignon Blanc.

The delicate smoke on the fish absolutely transforms the wine and tempers the acid. Serve smoked trout or salmon on top of little rye toast and top with a dollop of horseradish cream. Garnish with pickled onion or capers.

The salty fish and tangy cream melts in your mouth and the wine refreshes your palate after each bite.

Wiener schnitzel, Cracked Potatoes, and my mom's Fresh Cucumber Salad serve as a classic trio for your entree.

Open a Zweigelt from the region and enjoy the bright berry flavors that make this wine so easy to drink. If you cannot find Zweigelt, Sonoma County Zinfandel works beautifully.

Enjoy your party and choose not to slave over dessert. Purchase a classic Linzer Torte from a local bakery and pair it with a Trockenbeereauslese



(TBA) Welsh Riesling from Neusiedler See or other white dessert wine like a French Sauternes or a Hungarian Tokaji. The almonds, lemon, and buttery crust have the right sweetness for the rich wine.

Also, do choose the apricot filling. Raspberry or plum are both fantastic, but the stone fruit notes are harmonious with the sweet white.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Wiener Schnitzel

INGREDIENTS

4 (5 oz.) veal, chicken, turkey, or pork cutlets (traditional) pounded to 1/4-inch thickness

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Oil for frying
- Lemon wedges

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a large frying pan. Dredge cutlets in seasoned flour, then egg, then paprika breadcrumbs. Fry the cutlets in hot oil making sure the breaded meat "swims" in fat. Contrary to instinct, the breading will take on less oil than if the meat is sticking to the pan. Fry to golden brown and fully cooked through. Drain on paper towels. Serve with wedges of lemon.

Yield: 4 servings

An Austrian Christmas



Cracked Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 12 small-medium Yukon potatoes
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, plus 1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- Coarse salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 clove garlic, sliced

DIRECTIONS

Choose potatoes that are similar in size; you can cut some in half if they are too large. Rinse and split the skin with a paring knife.

Over low heat, add the olive oil to a medium-sized, heavy-bottomed saucepan, then add the potatoes, thyme sprigs and season generously with salt and pepper.

Place the lid on the pan and allow to cook, undisturbed, shaking the pan every 5 minutes or so, until the potatoes are tender and browned, about 20 minutes. (Check occasionally to make sure the potatoes aren't browning too quickly and adjust heat accordingly.)

Remove the lid and cook a further 2 to 3 minutes, for the condensation to evaporate.

Remove the thyme sprigs and add the sliced garlic and chopped fresh thyme and cook until the garlic is caramelized and chewy, about 2 minutes.

You can fish the potatoes and garlic out with a slotted spoon, but it is most efficient method is to use a metal colander fitted over a catch basin for the hot oil.

These are roasted potatoes cooked on the stove top. They are a great alternative to boiled potatoes.

Yield: 6 servings

Fresh Cucumber Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large cucumbers, sliced thin
- 1/2 red onion, sliced into rings
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoon white, cider, or rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 garlic cloves
- paprika to garnish

DIRECTIONS

Place cucumbers and onion in a watertight bowl. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon. salt and cover with water. Stand for a minimum of half an hour up to overnight.

Place cucumbers and onions in colander and gently squeeze all liquid with a paper towel. Return to watertight bowl. Sprinkle with sugar, add garlic and toss. The onions should separate into individual rings. Add 3/4 cup water and vinegar. Stand for a minimum of 1 hour.

Serve chilled in small bowls, garnish with paprika.

Yield: 6 servings

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

Cooking with Winter Greens

by Deb Morris, Pacific Coast Farmers Market

When you are craving a big green salad, look no further than the leafy robust flavor of winter greens. These are green leafy vegetables that are seasonally available in winter and early spring. Common vegetables described as winter greens are chard, collards, spinach, rapini, mustard, beet, and kale. They include several different vegetable families and are categorized under "winter greens" because of their availability during the cold months.

Of course, in California they can be grown almost year-round, but most are at their peak of flavor during the winter months and are a hardy, prolific crop. They are a popular row crop for farmers to grow because the same plant can produce multiple bunches and it continues to produce leaves even after several cuttings. The fresher the greens, the better their flavor. Winter greens from the local farmers' market have that just-picked flavor, which is intense, well-rounded, and ready for any recipes you want.

Their hearty flavors can range from lemony sorrel and mild chard to peppery turnip greens and strong collards. Use baby greens for a milder flavor and fully mature greens for a more robust taste in your recipes.

Winter greens are highly nutritious and flavorful ingredients to supplement recipes during the winter months when other vegetables might not be in season. Mix them with winter root vegetables like roasted carrots and beets, tuck the leaves into a sandwich, add them to soups and stews, combine into casseroles, mix them in pasta dishes, or make a leafy winter salad with winter squash and pomegranate seeds.

Here are some tips before cooking with winter greens:

Most winter greens have thick, fibrous stems that are not inedible but tough and should be removed. Use your hands or a sharp knife to remove them. Tear with



your hands or cut the leaves away from the stems. But rather than throwing away the stems, blanch and use them in stir fry dishes, pesto, and salads.

With their hearty flavors and thicker textures, it is best to pair them with vigorous companion ingredients. Mix them with bacon or sausage, dried fruit, acidic liquids like vinegar or citrus juice, and hefty winter vegetables like winter squash.

Use collard green leaves or chard leaves in place of tortillas or bread if you are avoiding carbs. They do not need to be cooked and can be rolled around your favorite filling like chicken or tuna salad.

Have an overabundance of greens? Freeze them for later. Prep and blanch the leaves and then freeze them on a baking sheet before storing them in a freezer bag for up to a few months. Use them later for soups, stews, salads, smoothies, braises, and stir-fries.

To tame the bitterness associated with winter greens, blanch them before using in dishes like pastas and casseroles. Most tender greens, such as spinach can be simply sautéed. Salt and acid can both lessen the bitterness.

Most farmers' market vegetable vendors offer a variety of delicious winter greens.

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JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by Jill Hedgecock

The Otherworldliness of Sedona

Situated about halfway between Phoenix and the Grand Canyon, Sedona, Arizona is a mecca for nature lovers, art enthusiasts, and the spiritually inclined. With only a two-night stopover on our road trip itinerary, my husband, sister, and I had tough choices to make, given all the experiences this amazing destination offers. Our final selections included a hike to one of the most iconic vortexes, exploring the shops of Tlaquepaque Arts and Crafts Village, and driving Red Rock Loop to view the sweeping vistas with a stopover at Red Rock Canyon State Park.

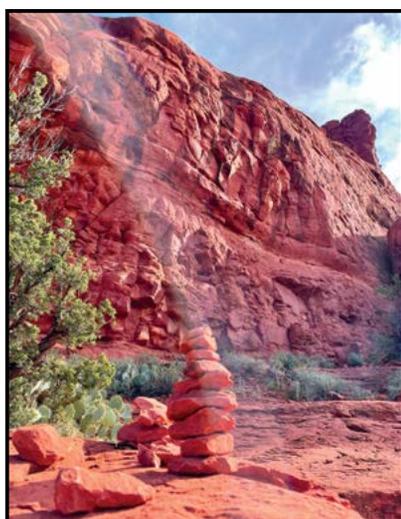
We kicked off our activities by heading to Bell Rock Pathway (ranked #2 of things to do in Sedona by Tripadvisor) to investigate the validity of the vortex phenomenon. Vortexes are described as swirling centers of energy that promote healing, meditation, and self-exploration. Some energies are reported to flow up, some flow down, some are considered masculine, while others trend feminine.



The House of Fire stands out against the landscape

The Bell Rock vortex is believed to flow up, is masculine, and best known for providing visitors with a sense of serenity and an ability to solve problems from a spiritual perspective. Three other commonly known Sedona vortexes are Airport Mesa, Cathedral Rock, and Boynton Canyon. This energy or magnetic fields are not visible, but people have described feeling their skin tingle or vibrations coming from the Earth. Mystical healings have even been reported. These benevolent modern-day experiences are more pleasant than the ancestral Yavapai tribe's belief that the red rocks represented the bodies and blood of enormous monsters.

Our excursion to Bell Rock proved to be a relatively easy hike, except for our detour to climb to the second tier of the bell. The mildness of our ascent might have been because we took a less touristy path to the upper level. Our journey may have been the road less traveled, but an abundance of rock cairns (stacked



Vortex or just a lens glare?

rocks) suggested our route was a popular one.

The vantage point provided spectacular views, but there was no obvious place to stand for a maximum vortex experience. Yet, I had an uncanny sense of something unusual about the place, and I found it odd how some of my pictures had streaks of white, some halos



The painted hills and sky against the vegetation look surreal—a breathtaking view.

were even directed at the rock cairns. Sure, it could have been the sunlight playing tricks on the camera, but...maybe not.

I went into the vortex experience with a healthy bit of skepticism, but by the time we descended to the main trail, an unexplainable calmness had claimed me. Maybe there really is something to the vortex phenomenon.

We wanted a longer hike, so we extended our route to include Courthouse Butte. This 4-mile walk, ranked as a moderate hike, is a fairly pleasant one because the topography is mostly flat. There were a few navigational challenges though. As we progressed around the northern side of Bell Rock, signage became less frequent. Unmarked forks in the trail became problematic, forcing us to rely on the AllTrails phone app to stay the course at confusing junctures.

Courthouse Butte offers unusual vegetation and surreal looking cacti that made the extra trek worthwhile. From the right vantage point, the butte reportedly resembles the profile of a human face gazing upwards. I guess we didn't have the right vantage point. Visitors should plan on getting an early start when visiting Bell Rock to ensure a parking space is available. Remember to bring along water and snacks for your outing.

We took a back road to reach Red Rock Loop, a navigational mistake as the paved road transitioned to gravel, forcing us to backtrack to find the proper entrance. It was late afternoon by the time we finally reached Red Rock Canyon State Park.

Having ascended the stairs near the Red Rock's Miller Visitor Center, we were awestruck by incredible panoramic views of the rust-colored formations of Cathedral Rock, Seven Warriors, and Napoleon's Tomb.

Another short hike took us to Oak Creek across Kingfisher Bridge, and up a hill to the rear of the House of Apache Fires. The Hopi-style pueblo house, which is perched on a 50-foot cliff, is fenced off, but an information board explains its fascinating history before becoming a part of Red Rock State Park in 1991.

We returned to the visitor center to explore the educational displays and browse the gift shop. Out of mere curiosity,

Sedona holds a magical quality that draws many visitors from around the world. Described as an open-air cathedral, it is considered to hold mysterious forces that emanate from the fiery red rocks and landscapes. It is here that many find an inner spirituality.

we purchased some prickly pear candy, which we discovered tastes like a gummy.

The Red Loop Road drive back to downtown Sedona presented breathtaking views of more sandstone formations, including several different angles of Cathedral Rock, one of the most-photographed sights in Arizona.

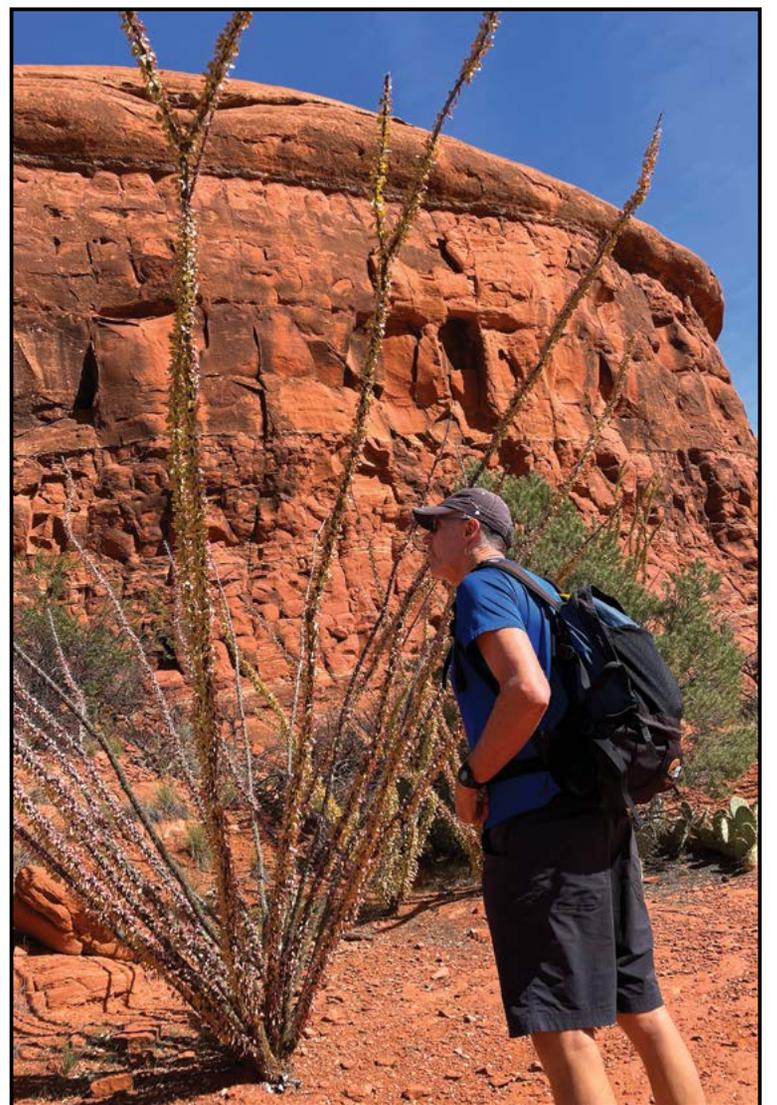
In Sedona, our next mission was to explore the shops at Tlaquepaque Arts and Crafts Village. Tlaquepaque which means "best of everything" is fashioned after a traditional Mexican village. It has many porticoes, archways, and bronze statues connected by meandering cobblestone paths. Giant sycamore and cottonwood trees, lush greenery, and a cascading fountain created a soothing vibe as we explored the many art galleries and stores featuring gemstones, Native American rugs, jewelry, Day of the Dead trinkets, and many other items.

For dining, we opted for southwest fare. El Rincon serves Mexican cuisine plus some dishes with Native American twists. It was a popular dining option and we ended up waiting over an hour for a table. However, we used that time to visit some of the art galleries that were fortunately open. The popularity of El Rincon is well deserved. My meal of a blue corn-crusting relleno was unique and delicious.

Having learned our lesson, the following night we made reservations at the Javalena Cantina. The southwestern food at Javalena Cantina and the jovial vibe of the place made this dining experience also quite memorable.

Two nights to explore Sedona proved to be too short. There were many "must-see" items that became "must-return-to-see" goals, including exploring the three other vortex sites, the Devil's Bridge hike, as well as a visit to the Chapel of the Holy Cross, which is reported to offer spectacular views of the surrounding dramatic rock formations at sunset.

Whether or not you are a believer in the metaphysical, the unparalleled beauty of Sedona gives the area an air of otherworldliness that is worth exploring.



Eric standing by unusual cactus



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Feel the Energy!

Ruth Bancroft Garden Expands Garden of D'Lights

While you are driving around the neighborhoods searching for beautiful displays of Christmas lights, add Ruth Bancroft Garden's Fourth Annual Garden of D'Lights as one of your destinations. Garden of D'Lights is a holiday experience for visitors of all ages who will certainly enjoy wandering through the three acres of glowing garden paths. The colorful, botanical sculptures created by thousands of lights and lasers on cacti, succulents, trees is a must-see exhibit.

Each year the event grows. They have added more lights and lasers and this year also features sculptural art from local artists.

Open evenings, Thursday-Sunday,

November 25 – January 8. Entrance Times: 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30PM. Tickets: Adults \$28 | Children \$16 | Children 4 and under free. Garden members receive discounts on select tickets.

For details and tickets, go to: ruthbancroftgarden.org/garden-of-dlights/.

The Ruth Bancroft Garden is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization with a mission to preserve Ruth Bancroft's example of exceptional design and expansive water conserving plant collection for the enjoyment and education of the public.

Ruth Bancroft Garden and Nursery, 1552 Bancroft Rd in Walnut Creek.

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the concordian
by Edi Birsan
EdiBirsan@gmail.com

Emotions and the Term Sheet

In the season of hope and goodwill toward all, the emotions on the development project of the Concord Naval Weapon Station surrounds it as it moves forward to its next phase. Unfortunately, the emotions are not exactly in concordance with the hopes of the season.

Wishful Denial

About a third of the opposition to the base development is rooted in the fundamental opposition to any development on the Base and a wish for it to remain open space. This ship has sailed and was sunk about 15 years ago. The reason we have already secured a gigantic regional park of over 2500 acres is because of the agreement to develop the rest.

That agreement also involves giving the Federal Government a bunch of money and requiring the city through its developer to secure housing for the homeless and affordable housing. Otherwise, the Navy would simply, in effect, sell it at bid to the highest dollar amount without any restrictions. This is exactly what the Fed's did with the Coast Guard property.

Fear and Weakness

The world is a dangerous place. We have an economic system which is based on the focus of financial gain first and foremost. Wall Street is dedicated to this. All developers have massive dangers attached, and none can be trusted. Mother Theresa never formed a Master Developer Company.

Given the choice between dealing with a Wall Street firm with a recent history of breaking a labor agreement and having walked away from a municipal agreement, we chose to deal with a combination of partners that we felt gave us the most oversight power relative to ourselves to get things done.

We have already seen this play out so far with Concord First Partners when we dealt with their concerns in the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement in October 2021, and their problems in May of this year with the extension of the agreement and their fears of the project. The city moved to redirect them to focus on the term sheet and secured items beyond what was required in the original request for bid.

Hatred

One cannot separate from the noisy background on the term sheet, the disdain, if not outright hatred, of one of the partners, namely Discovery Builders

which is now in its third generation of ownership by members of the Seeno Family, and by the way, may be in its 5th generation by the time the project is done 30 to 50 years from now.

This foul emotion was epitomized by Save Mount Diablo (SMD) whose representatives to the pre-August 2021 vote actually stated that they were totally opposed to anything that included anyone from any member of the "notorious Seeno Family" regardless of present or future generations, brothers, sisters, grand or great grandchildren regardless of involvement with the specifics of past acts.

They refused to meet with Concord First Partners and the City to work on their issues even after the Park District settled their arguments and stated that they support working with Concord First Partners on the base development.

Hope

What has transpired within the last year gives me hope that the city can obtain the goals it has set for the development and more. Here are a few of the bonuses outlined in the term sheet:

50 percent of the residential building will be non-affiliates, meaning Non-Discovery/Lewis/CCIC builders.

Originally all bidders said there was no chance of getting any kind of gap finance for the affordable housing component. Now we see they are looking at getting it.

Originally the city's \$14-16 million up front costs were to be paid back over the course of the project. Now it is within the first two phases.

We have larger numbers of affordable housing as well as more housing in general.

We have commitments to not just add a platform for a library, but actual dollars.

Tournament fields again; not just a piece of land with utilities to its edges, but \$100m.

\$65 million to the Campus district in addition to the utilities.

Four acres of land for a Veterans Hall.

Connecting the trails in and out of the Base.

I look forward to making this happen, and to creating a new era and legacy for all of us.

MARTINEZ HAPPENINGS

Contra Costa Health Dept.: "Hazardous Materials Release At Martinez Oil Refinery Contained Heavy Metals"

A powdery substance was released into the community by Martinez Refining Company (MRC). According to the Contra Costa Health Department (CCH), ash samples contained higher-than-normal amounts of heavy metals.

In a statement released by CCH, CCH does not believe there was an immediate health risk to the community. The most significant health risks were short-term respiratory impacts from breathing in the metals in the hours after the release. Exposure to high concentrations of these metals over a long period of time could cause more serious health problems.

The accidental release of "spent catalyst" from the refinery began about 9:30 p.m. November 25, and into the early morning hours of Friday, Nov. 25. Ash samples taken near the refinery showed levels of aluminum, barium, chromium, nickel, vanadium, and zinc higher than normal background levels for those metals.

CCH and the County's Community Warning System were not notified of the release as required by law. CCH's HazMat team learned about the release on Saturday morning after seeing community complaints about white dust on surfaces near the refinery. In its amended 72-hour report regarding the incident submitted to the health department, MRC says it is investigating why those notifications were not made.

"Martinez residents need an immediate response when there is a release at the refinery," said Deputy Health Director Matt Kaufmann. "MRC's failure to follow notification procedure cost us critical time we could have used to warn the public and reduce health risks in the community. It's unacceptable."

People should avoid handling or breathing any remaining dust that has settled on the ground or other surfaces.

"We are concerned for people's health anytime they are exposed to toxic metals," said Dr. Ori Tzvieli, health officer for Contra Costa County. "Our

goal going forward is to make sure something like this doesn't happen again."

In a statement released by MRC, "... analysis shows the primary makeup of the spent catalyst includes alumina silicate, clay, and other minerals mined from the earth. The catalyst had been incinerated at high temperatures to remove impurities for reuse in the refining process and was accidentally released during overnight hours on Thanksgiving night. We are very sorry this release of spent catalyst occurred and apologize to our neighbors who found the material on their vehicles, homes, and buildings. This material can be removed by rinsing with water from surfaces such as patio furniture, driveways, and plants."

Martinez Refining Company experienced an unrelated flaring event due to an equipment malfunction. Flares are an essential part of a refinery's integrated, engineered safety systems that safely and effectively manage excess combustible gases by burning them off efficiently and effectively. The lab findings confirmed the spent catalyst found in the community is unrelated to flaring.

For anyone who may have difficulty removing the spent catalyst from their vehicles, Martinez Refining Company has made arrangements with Autopia Car Wash, to provide car washes to Martinez residents and businesses in the affected area through December 2, 2022.



photo credit: Alice Saliba - Facebook

City Of Martinez Closes and Cleans Up Homeless "Camp Hope"

With the departure of the Homeless Action Coalition in late October from Camp Hope, a homeless camp located at the Waterfront, the City of Martinez quickly organized a project team to oversee the compassionate closure of the site.

The project team included Police,

Public Works, case management workers, nonprofits and volunteers. In November, the team began working with over 20 homeless individuals at the site, and over the last few weeks, was able to successfully place everyone into shelters or assist in connecting them with friends and family.



Kite man of Martinez, Tony Jetland, helps scouts at Scouts Kite Days at the Martinez Marina. Elizabeth and Max (scout) Kite Man, Jack and Monica Regional District Executive for the scouts



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COMMUNITY SERVICE

December 22

Wills Clinic Concord Senior Center
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM. Free simple wills are available to seniors with low incomes and limited resources. Call (925) 671-3320 for an appointment. Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Concord

December 17, Ceremony. Lafayette Cemetery

9 AM. The ceremony will include the Presentation of Colors by the VFW Post 8063 Color Guard, military wreath laying by service members and veterans and comments by emcee, Scott Butler, D.A.R. 3285 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

EVENTS

FARMERS' MARKETS

Pacific Coast Farmers Market
Concord Todos Santos Plaza

Tuesdays, 9:00am to 2:00pm.

Thursdays 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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

Walnut Creek Kaiser 1425 South Main 10 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Fridays 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Rossmoor Golden Rain Rd.

Saturdays 9:00am.-1:00 pm. Shadeands North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr.

Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. 1799 Locust St.

Concord Farmers Market, Nov 1,15,29 9 AM – 2 PM, Concord High School, 4200 Concord Blvd, Concord



Ruth Bancroft Gardens

Thru January 8, 2023 Garden of D'Lights

an outdoor experience. <http://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/garden-of-dlights/>

Ruth Bancroft Gardens, 1552 Bancroft Road, <https://www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/events/>

December 10 DISCOVERY BAY LIGHTED BOAT PARADE

5:30 PM. The long-running

DBYC (Discovery Bay Yacht Club) is one of this community's signature events and each year draws thousands of attendees and participants from around Northern California. Discovery Bay Marina 5901 Marina Road, Discovery Bay (925) 413-3646 <https://www.dbyc.com/dbycevent@gmail.com>

December 10

Monumental Toy Drive, 12 PM - 4 PM. Bring your children for a free toy and holiday fun. Visit with Santa. Crafts, Games and Prizes. 2250 Commerce Ave. Ste D. Concord.

December 12

Santa Paws, Pet Photos with Santa. Bring your furry friend to meet Santa 5 pm-7 pm In the Grand Court, SunValley Mall, Concord.

December 17

HEAD WEST Holiday at Todos Santos Plaza in Concord. HEAD WEST is a Local, Outdoor Marketplace of Makers, Merchants, Crafters, Designers + Artists in partnership with Creative Concord by Local Edition Creative.

December 27-29

DIY Session in conjunction with Home Depot, 2 PM-3 PM in the Food Court, Sunvalley Mall, Concord

CLUBS

December 12

Master Novel Plot Writer Rosenfeld Headlines California Writers Club December Meeting. Jordan Rosenfeld, author of six novels, including How to Write a Page-Turner, will be the guest speaker. Check-in at Zio Fraedo's in Pleasant Hill begins at 11 a.m. Guests are welcome and can pay at the door. Mt. Diablo Branch. 707-813-1197 bloodythrillers@gmail.com
611 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill

December 17

Kymerlie Ingalls will present "Create a Relevant Marketing Plan" at the Tri-Valley Writers meeting. 2:00 PM. Kymerlie Ingalls is an award-winning essayist, editor, and author of memoir, opinion, and short fiction. Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard Road in Pleasanton. Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m. Reservations required at <https://www.trivalleywriters.org/speaker-meeting-registration-and-payment/> CWC adult members, \$14; nonmembers, \$18. CWC student members (ages 14-22), \$6; student nonmembers, \$10.

ARTS/THEATRE/MUSIC

Thru February 14, 2023 VERANDA ON ICE

4-9 PM Weekdays; 4-11 PM Fridays; 11 AM-11PM Saturdays; 11 AM-9 PM Sundays. Ice at the Veranda is back this winter and we look forward to welcoming you back to skate! Come glide on the ice. Shop Veranda, Concord

Thru December 19, LIVE COMEDY @ VINNIE'S 7:30 PM, Vinnie's Bar, 2045 Mt Diablo St, Concord.

Thru December 23 COME AND TAKE PICTURES WITH SANTA CLAUS!

Time: Varies Daily
Location: Martinez St., Plaza Downtown, Martinez <https://www.contracostalive.com/event/6872>

Thru December Holiday Arts, Main Street Arts

eleven special artists have created unique cards, ornaments, jewelry, glassware, sculpture and paintings for your family and friends. Create handmade and mini painting ornaments for your holiday tree. Wednesday-Saturday 11 AM-4 PM and Sunday from 10 AM-2 PM. Experience the Holiday Wall of paintings .Main Street Arts, 613 Main Street, Martinez. 925-269-8049 www.mainstreetarts.net

December 3

Holiday Book Sale Dublin Library, 12 – 3 PM

At this holiday book sale, you will find a great selection of beautiful books in excellent condition, ideal for gift giving. 200 Civic Plaza, Dublin

December 9-January 16, 2023 WALNUT CREEK ON ICE

11 AM- 9 PM daily; 11 AM-11 PM Weekends
Ice skate at Civic Park. Great fun for the whole family. Open 7 days a week. <https://walnutcreekonice.com/12/9/2022-1/16/2023>
Civic Park , 1365 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek

December 10

The East Bay Sports Cards & Collectibles Show 10:00AM - 5:00PM. Early Bird Admission: \$5 Kids Under 12: Free, Concord Plaza Hotel
45 John Glenn Dr, Concord, CA 94520
<https://www.eastbaycardshow.com>

December 10, 11

Diablo Womens' Chorale 3:00 PM – 4:45 PM. Pre-concert tickets are at a discounted price at \$28.00 online. Ticket prices at the door day of the concert are \$33.00 for adults and \$18.00 for students. Advanced purchase tickets at diablowomenschorale.org. 1543 Sunnyvale Ave, Walnut Creek

Lescher Center for the Arts:

December 2 - 3

Once Upon A Christmas
Presented by The Ballet School. A fully narrated ballet, based on a Fantasy Forum Actors Ensemble story about a clumsy Elf named Roho. Come and see how the Dolls and Toys come to life to celebrate before saying goodbye as they set forth on their Christmas Eve journey.

December 8 - 22

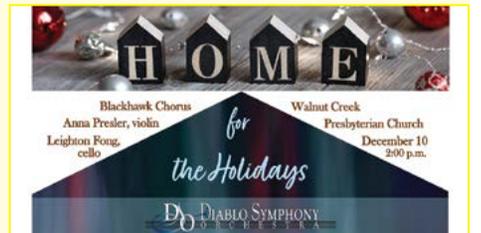
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Presented by Center REPeritory Showtimes vary. Consult website

for tickets. Brimming with music and dance, love and laughter, spectacular special effects. Join the thousands who make this theatrical event a part of their annual holiday traditions.



December 10 Holiday Concert: Home for the Holidays

Presented by Diablo Symphony Orchestra
2:00 PM - 4:15 PM. Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave
Walnut Creek



December 10 -22

Visit to the North Pole, Presented by Leshar Center and Fantasy Forum Actors Ensemble
An immersive, live theatre experience with holiday magic.

December 15, 16

A Jolly, Jazzy Christmas! (at Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center) Presented by Concord High School Choir
Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center
321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill



January 12-22, 2023 Kenn Adams creates the sun and the moon in Synergy Theater's Spontaneous Myth and Magic:

An Improvised Ancient Mythology! This completely improvised two-act comedy will keep the audience in laughter from the dawn of time until the end of days! Showtimes: Thursdays – Saturdays at 8:15 PM and Sundays at 3:15 PM.



Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive , Walnut Creek, <https://www.lesherartscenter.org> Tickets: (925) 943-7469 Wednesday - Sunday Noon to 6:00 p.m.



In Theaters

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever

How do you make a superhero movie without a superhero? This is the challenge for the latest Marvel installment.

With actor Chadwick Boseman's passing in 2020, the franchise was faced with continuing the popular film without the main character. His death also cast a sad and heavy shadow that can be difficult for movies based on escapism. The Marvel franchise decided to, instead, face this head on and make a film about grief and the struggles to move on after the death of a loved one.

Wakanda is in mourning and does not want to participate in the world now that King T'Challa/Black Panther is gone. This is, of course, impossible as the world moves on and new threats to Wakanda must be dealt with. Wakanda still has a strong and capable army with Queen Ramonda (Angela Bassett) and General Okoye (Danai Gurira) in charge, but their hearts and purpose are missing. This is most evident with Princess Shuri (Letitia Wright), who blames herself for being unable to save her brother, the king, from illness through her brilliant scientific knowledge. As we see all the major characters in pain, it is Shuri's story arc that carries this film. We need to see if she can come to terms with her emotions and her analytical mind.



The addition of combat instructor Aneka (Michaela Coel) and American college student Riri Williams (Dominique Thorne), plus some interesting plot setups, ensure this is not the last installment in the Black Panther lexicon.

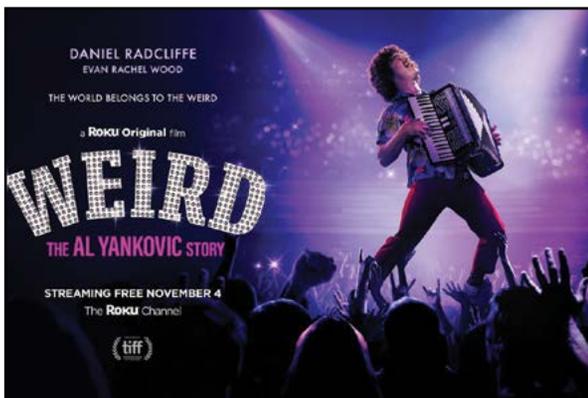
Some people believe that superhero films are full of fluff and are cranked out solely for ticket sales. While that may be true of some movies, Wakanda Forever proves that a blockbuster, heavy CGI film is capable of delivering an emotional wallop. It is arguably the most solemn film in the Marvel universe, but it connects its audience to the heart of the fictional characters and gives a loving real-world tribute to actor Chadwick Boseman. Bring tissues.

And if, like me, it has been a while since you have seen a Marvel movie, I must remind you to stay past Rihanna's beautiful song "Lift Me Up" to get vital information related to the continuing storyline.

Rated PG-13 for violence and intense scenes

Now Streaming

Weird: The Al Yankovic Story



The king of parody songs parodies his own life in the new biopic "Weird: The Al Yankovic Story." It may seem like an unusual choice to cast Daniel Radcliffe of Harry Potter fame as goofy Weird Al, but if you have seen Radcliffe in any season of TBS's *Miracle Workers*, you know he has the comedic chops to deliver. It may also seem strange that the streaming platform Mr. Yankovic chose for his movie is the Roku channel. Actually, everything about this film is... weird.

If you are looking to learn about Al Yankovic's unique path to fame, this film is going to give you little insight. While there are some slivers of facts, recording in a men's room and the truth that artists did experience a spike in record sales after Yankovic parodied their songs, most of the film is a crazy sendup of celebrity in the 1980's.

We follow Al Yankovic from childhood to the height of his popularity in the

mid-1980's. A young Al faces parents that do not understand his unique talent, and an adult Al confronts a music industry that does not know what to do with someone with the gift of changing words in other people's songs for comedic effect. Al perseveres and finds his niche. He becomes famous for this distinctive talent and then must deal with all the trappings that come with fame. Although this sounds like a normal plot, this film goes completely off the rails with facts and storylines.

The cameos provide the most fun in this film. Not only is it a hoot to see which current celebrities show up in this film, it is also a trip down memory lane to see who is being spoofed. If you lived through the 1970's and 1980's, you may need to explain to the younger generation that the crazy characters portrayed were real celebrities back in the day. Most of the fun is in the surprise, so I will not give any of them away.

Like Yankovic's songs, the purpose of this film is to entertain and make us laugh. If you have forgotten about Weird Al, he is here to remind us that he is still making fun of us and himself and we only need to sit back and enjoy.

Rated TV-14 for language and violence. Now streaming The Roku Channel



Books by Local East Bay Authors Make Excellent Gifts

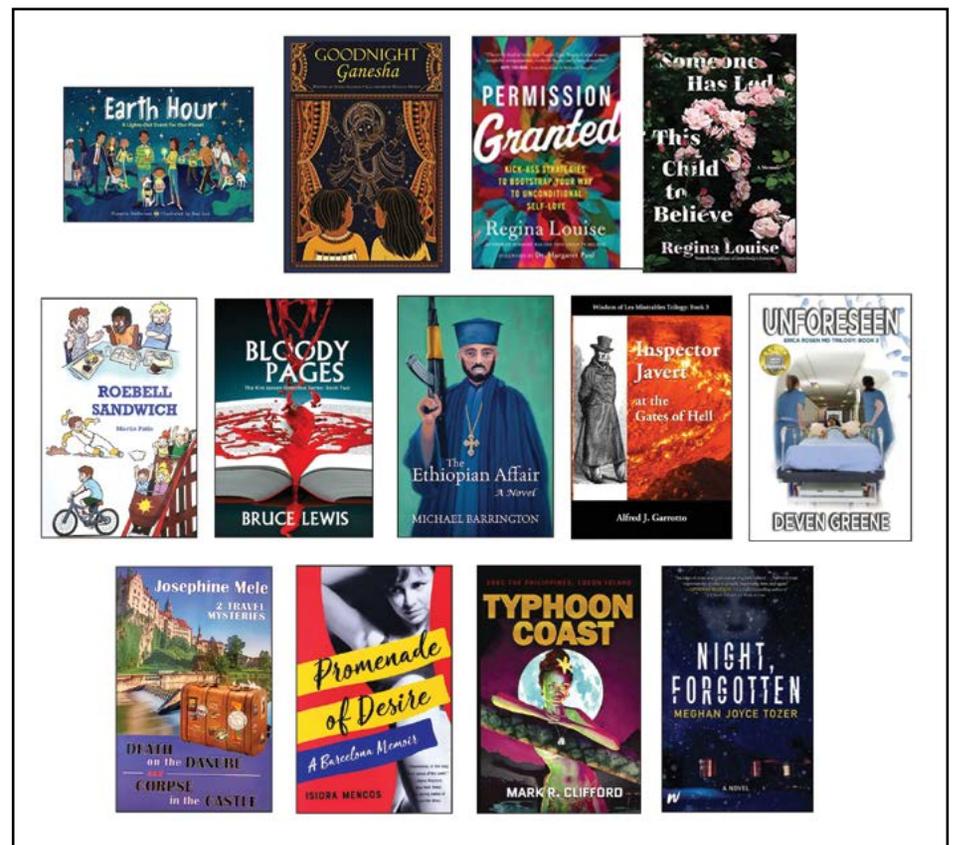
Local bookstores are neighborhood treasures. They often carry books that might otherwise be overlooked, especially titles by local authors. And while reading a book can change the way we think, buying from a local bookstore can also help the planet because it requires less packaging, less transportation and generates a smaller carbon footprint. Supporting locally owned businesses builds strong communities.

Likewise, purchasing books from authors in your area keeps money circulating locally. Books make a fine gift for any age. Here are a few prominent titles

Michael Barrington's latest novel, "The Ethiopian Affair", is an international thriller about a plot to kidnap the US ambassador to Ethiopia.

Concord's Al Garrotto's latest novel, "Inspector Javert at the Gates of Hell", is based on Victor Hugo's classic "Les Misérables." The tome follows Inspector Javert, Victor Hugo's fictional antihero, after he jumps into the swirling River Seine.

Greene's third book in the Erica Rosen MD trilogy, "Unforeseen", has pediatrician Erica Rosen defending her job and preventing Dr. Nilsen's



from local authors you will find in local stores.

The following books are available at Flashlight Books:

"Earth Hour" is an educational book teaching how kids around the world use electric energy to do all kinds of things and raises awareness about the annual March "Earth Hour" event of turning off the lights.

Goodnight Ganesha by Nadia Salomon is a picture book featuring two children visiting their grandparents in India who find there's so much fun to be had as nighttime falls over the city.

"Permission Granted" by Regina Louise is a gateway to uncover who you are and provides ways to give yourself the care and support. Regina Louise's "Someone Has Led This Child to Believe" tells the true story of her ability to overcome neglect in the US foster-care system.

The following books are available at Reasonable Books:

"Roebell Sandwich" by Martin Patin is a novel for young readers about the ups and downs in the life of one twelve-year-old boy growing up in Queens, New York, in the 1970s.

"Bloody Pages: A Kim Jansen Detective Novel" by Bruce Lewis is about the theft of priceless books from a public library and an investigation into the bloody attack on the security guard who was trying to protect them.

dangerous scheme to harm her patients.

Josephine Mele's "Two Travel Mysteries: Book 2 follows June Gordon's latest exotic travel adventures in "Death on the Danube" and "Corpse in the Castle".

"Promenade of Desire!" is the moving recounting of the author entering adulthood in Barcelona during a time of immense cultural and political change spurred by Franco's dictatorship.

Mark R. Clifford's "Typhoon Coast" follows a man's journey from boyhood to Marine to a San Francisco policeman.

"Night, Forgotten" is Meghan Joyce Tozer's addictive psychological thriller about a young woman whose life changes in an instant, and nothing is ever the same.

Contact your local bookstores about the availability of these and other titles from local authors:

Berkshire Books - 3480 Clayton Rd. Concord

Barnes and Noble - 2025 Diamond Blvd. Ste 125, Concord

Flashlight Books - 1537 N. Main St., Walnut Creek

Reasonable Books - 3645 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Ste C, Lafayette

Happy Shopping!

For the Love of Pets
By Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

When Polly Flies Away



The hubbub and chaos of family visits over the holidays can sometimes lead to the unthinkable, i.e., Fido slips out an unlatched gate, a frightened Fluffy or a startled Polly escapes out the open front door. While Fido or Fluffy may be picked up by animal control or are familiar to neighbors who might bring it inside and contact the owner, capturing pet birds who have gotten loose pose special challenges. The focus of this column is the time-critical steps one should take after an escape or if you find a pet bird.

Lost Birds. It can happen in a flash. A bird getting exercise outside its cage when the front door opens. In an instant, the beloved pet has vanished. According to Concord's Avian Rescue, here are the steps a pet owner should take:

Start searching several blocks near your home immediately. Most escaped birds are terrified and will hide in a tall tree. Call their name loudly and listen for a response. Place the bird's cage outside filled with its favorite treats and fresh water with the cage door open. Talk to neighbors and distribute missing pet flyers around the neighborhood and with local veterinarians and animal shelters. List the bird missing with online lost and found sites such as www.911parrotalert.com/ and www.birdhotline.com/.

The sprucePETS.com suggests that owners with multiple birds position another bird's cage near an open window. The vocalization from a familiar bird may lure your bird back home. In addition to checking trees, look at rooftops for your beloved pet. Lost pet flyers should include the bird's name (parrots have been known to squawk their own name to would-be rescuers), a recent photo, and list the species and a description and whether it has an ID band or is microchipped. Most importantly, include your contact information and an unspecified reward.

They also recommend that the owner file a police report on the lost bird, providing detailed information on your bird, the date, time, and location that he or she was lost.

Remember to broadcast your missing bird on social media platforms and other neighborhood community groups such as Next Door and BuyNothing on Facebook. Also, contact local animal shelters, humane societies, and pet bird groups. Locally, Concord's Avian Rescue is a great option.

Found Birds. If you find a bird and do not recognize it, do your best to help reunite it with its owner. Perhaps, the best approach is to take the bird to a lo-

cal bird veterinarian, such as Feathered Follies in Concord to have it checked for a microchip. If you find yourself unable to properly care for the bird while searching for the owner, then the vet will have practical suggestions on what to do next.

Losing a pet bird is traumatic for both owner and pet. The sooner they can be reunited, the more likely Polly will be happily demanding a cracker.

For more information on what to do if you find or lose a pet bird, consider these sites:

<https://www.thesprucepets.com/lost-pet-bird-4773150>

<https://www.avianrescuecorp.org/escaped-bird-now-what/>

<https://www.mypet.com/pet-care-tips/why-pets-get-lost-during-the-holidays.aspx>

Please take care to keep your beloved pets safe during these busy times. Happy Holidays.

ARF ADOPTION STARS

Looking for a furry friend? Visit arflife.org to view all of ARF's adoptable animals or read more about ARF's adoption process.

Bumble Bee



Nine-month-old Bumble Bee would make a perfect adventure buddy. He is young, full of energy, and dedicated to being a Certified Good Boy. So you don't feel like adventure today? This playful pup could play fetch in the yard for as long as you can throw. Bumble Bee has a positive history with other dogs and currently weighs 55 pounds.

ARF adoption fees: \$250 for an adult dog, \$375 for a puppy (<6 months), \$150 for a special-needs dog, \$200 for a special-needs puppy (<6 months), and \$150 for a senior dog (7+ years). Adoption fees are waived for US military Veterans.

Twix



Seven-month-old Twix is a gorgeous lad with a luxurious coat that begs to be petted as much as he does himself. He will start making biscuits the moment he sees you as if to beckon you over to dote on him. Has a more loving cat ever existed? We doubt it. This guy is so into petting that it starts the waterworks going. Yes, little drips of drool will begin to drop, and he will give your hand sweet, gentle licks as a display of his love.

ARF adoption fees: \$125 for an adult cat, \$175 for a kitten (<6 months), \$200 for two adult cats, \$300 for two kittens, \$75 for a special-needs cat, \$100 for a special-needs kitten (<6 months), and \$75 for a senior cat (7+ years). Adoption fees are waived for US military Veterans.

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Have You Read the Authors Who Also Write for *The Diablo Gazette*

Michael Barrington 'Your Neighbor's Shoes' Column

David George 'Naked Gardener' Column

William Gensburger Editorials

Jill Hedgecock 'BookEnds' Column

Available on Amazon Books & Kindle

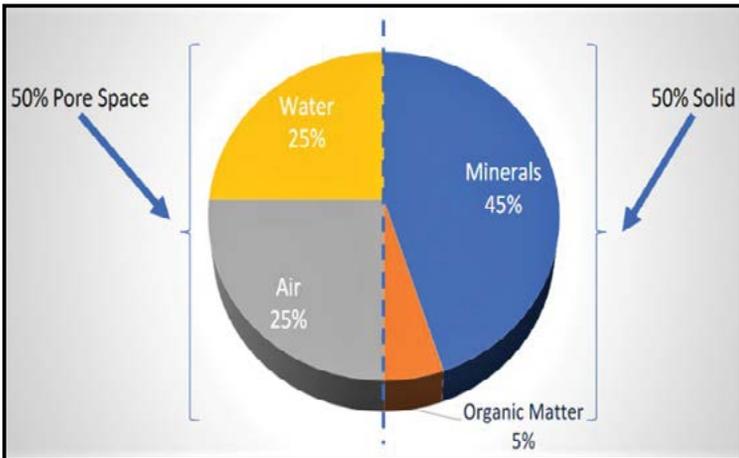
The Naked Gardener
 David George, UC-Certified
 Master Gardener

Compost Those Leaves

Happy holidays, my resolute naked gardeners. Fall is turning quickly into winter and nature is providing us with different sorts of gifts now. Occasional rains have wetted the soil and our hillsides and meadows are once again turning green with life. The East Bay's annual renewal cycle has begun.

But alas, one of nature's most important natural gifts is received by most of us like a lump of coal in our Christmas stocking. Leaves are falling now from our deciduous trees and shrubs, covering our landscaping beds and lawns. Many homeowners rake up these leaves and throw them away in their green waste containers to be buried in our local landfill. Naked gardeners, though, view these spent leaves as a major source of material for their compost pile and a natural way of recycling valuable nutrients back into our soil.

Healthy topsoil is a mix of around



45% mineral dirt (clay, sand, silt, and some larger pebbles), 25% moisture, 25% air, and about 5% organic matter, which includes decaying plant material and living creatures (the microbiome). Mother nature replenishes the organic materials that are consumed each year by the soil-dwelling critters.



These critters transform the decaying matter into usable nutrients (such as nitrogen) to feed our growing plant life. If we rake and throw away all of the leaves and other organic material that falls this time of year, nature cannot resupply its organic nutrients. What is left is nutrient-starved soil that must be supplemented by expensive store-bought chemical fertilizers.



Spent fall leaves are rich in carbon and fiber which are essential ingredients in healthy soil. Carbon is the energy

source for the living microbiome. The carbon in leaves provides the soil's living microbiome with its energy (food) to live, multiply, and create usable nutrients for our veggies, landscaping plants, and trees. You can feel that heat energy by sticking your hand into week-old composted material, such as piled-up grass.

You can start your own composting pile by raking fallen leaves into an inconspicuous area of your yard then letting them sit. The leaf pile will "passively" compost and shrink through winter and early spring then be ready to use as a natural soil supplement for your new plantings. Leaves covering your lawn can simply be shredded with your lawn mower (with no attached collection bag) and left to compost in place. They will decompose quickly with winter rains and add valuable nitrogen and organic matter to your lawn. It is easy and all-natural. Try it.

For more information about passive leaf and plant composting, check out the [Master Gardener blog](https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=44158) titled "Turn those Fall Leaves into Soil-Enriching Compost": <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=44158>.

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

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

Good News, Bad News, or Just Real Estate News?

According to Inman News, mortgage originations are up for the last three weeks in November as interest rates are easing a bit. This good news means that there are buyers out there, they just need to figure out how to finance the transaction. Creative mortgage programs are beginning to pop up that are helpful. Sellers are also helping with offers for credits for closing costs and making some repair negotiations. We have not seen such concessions for a while.

A recent Realtor.com survey concludes that 95% of sellers nationwide who sold their home in the past year got more than they paid for it.

To appeal to Online home shoppers, Zillow.com suggests sellers need to do things that grab the attention of these buyers such as pricing their home competitively and making their listing attractive.

These are statistics and reports from industry leaders who are reporting past information and/or projecting into 2023. Folks tend to pull back when they feel pinched by the market, the stock market, or just their own budget. In a home sale, this can mean the difference between sold or unsold.

Predicting where the market will go next year is anyone's guess. If you are going to sell, be realistic about it. Listen to the experts about value and heed their recommendations. They know what buyers are saying and what they are buying, which brings me to the following advice:

DON'T SCRIMP ON THE BASICS

1. Do not scrimp on a Realtor. There are things that a Realtor does that can add to your bottom-line including strategy, contacts and negotiation.
2. Do not scrimp on home prep and staging. This is often an easy target for cutting out of the budget but realize that the majority of buyers look for the flaws first in order to talk themselves out of liking or buying your home. If you do not prepare the home, fix the squeaky door or that nonworking lock, replace the microwave, etc., they will notice.
3. Do not scrimp on photography.

Prepare for the photographer. The photos will only show what is there and a good photographer can adjust lighting and angles, but not the garbage can or cat box, torn screen etc. Photographs are the drive-by of today. They get the buyer to walk through the home. If after viewing the photos they do not fall in love, you are off the list without even realizing it.

4. Do not quibble. If there is a light fixture, a fireplace screen, or anything in the home that has sentimental value and you want to keep it, either remove it before going to market or risk it becoming a deal-breaker for the buyer should they also want it, and you say no. A Redfin survey says the cancellation rate of real estate contracts is at its highest rate on record, around 20% in some cities, and an average of 17.2%. Yes, a buyer will walk away over what appears to the seller to be a minor thing. Do not invite that risk;

Where You May Recover the Most on Remodeling

Percent of Cost Recouped for Common Projects

Vinyl Siding	82%
Garage Door	100%
Roofing	100%
Upgrading Insulation	100%
New Wood Flooring	118%
Refinishing Hardwoods	147%

A Real Estate Professional:

- Knows what buyers are looking for in your area
- Uses their knowledge of today's housing market to determine what updates you may need to make
- Helps highlight any upgrades in your home's listing

Let's connect today to help you determine where to focus your efforts and stand out in a shifting market.

Sources: realtor.com, NAR

Terrylynn Fisher
 REALTOR® | CRS, SRES, CSP Elite Agent
 925.876.0966 | DRE# 00615420
Info@BuyStageSell.com | BuyStageSell.com

DUDUM REAL ESTATE GROUP
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Consult with me Early, so we can Plan, Budget, and Strategize!
 I have not and will not verify or investigate information provided or supplied by third parties.

Visit of the Ukraine Delegation to the Bay Area

by Michael Barrington

From November 4 – 11 the Rotary Club of Concord assisted by the Rotary Club of Pleasant Hill hosted a delegation of healthcare professionals from across Ukraine. As part of the Open World Program, funded by the Federal Government, four women and two men stayed with individual members and during the day visited medical centers in the Bay Area.



Meeting with officials from Stanford University Medical Center

Seeking to learn more about emergency and trauma services, they received presentations from heads of departments and made site visits to UCSF San Francisco, San Francisco General Hospital, San Ramon Medical Center, UC Davis Medical Center, John Muir Concord campus and Stanford University Medical Center. The team made many new friends and were given promises of future collaboration from their US peers.



Talking with Mt. Diablo High School students.

There was also an extraordinary opportunity for a group of high school seniors from Mt Diablo HS who are on a special track showing them careers and options in the medical field; they got to meet the delegation and ask questions.

For those of us working with the team daily, it was a sobering, informative and very humbling experience as each one repeatedly shared their stories describing their working situations and how each had been forced to adapt

to wartime conditions. It brought the whole tragedy of Ukraine forcibly home. I was particularly struck by the simple straightforward manner in which each person spoke without drama or fanfare.



Visiting a surgery center and learning about the state of the art equipment available.

Anastasia, an oncology specialist, was forced to send her eight-year-old daughter into Poland with her grandmother, at the beginning of the war just so she would be safe. Volodymyr's 750 bed hospital in Kyiv uses an emergency generator for electricity. In addition to constant air raids and drone attacks, and having to rush to a bomb shelter, his main problem is lack of gas for the generator. Never sure of a delivery, he has to shut it down for four or five hours each day.

Natasha is the director of a one-thousand bed hospital close to the front lines in the eastern region and receives about three hundred military casualties a day. Every week she sends away three train loads of stabilized patients to safer areas while three more trains bring in new ones. During the first two months of the war, she and all her staff lived in the hospital, they did not go home.

The country was not prepared for war and had to improvise and move quickly to adapt. In a matter of months, Natalia's hospital moved all essential medical services into newly constructed bunkers below ground, and in Kyiv, similar bunkers were constructed. Three of the team members were hospital directors and each one held the military rank of major. They told us that they have special permission from the Ministry of Health to leave the country and that at any given moment they could be called upon for active duty.

In addition, they offered their showroom as a venue for an evening when

Ukrainians got to share their stories with Rotarians from Contra Costa. With both the women and men wearing traditional national dress, they held the packed audience spellbound as each one personalized what it was like to live in a war zone.

But not all was work. The Concord Rotarians gave the team a tour of San Francisco in a Cadillac Escalade provided by Lehmers.

They visited the State Capitol and were also treated to a private tour of the USS Hornet in Alameda. One request they all made was to have some time for shopping, especially at the Apple store.



At San Francisco General Hospital



Enjoying a tour of the Bay Area and the USS Hornet in Alameda

As a footnote, since their return, I have just received an email from Oksana, the team leader who lives in Kyiv on the 12th floor in a high-rise apartment building with her husband and three-year-old son. Due to a drone strike she no longer has water or electricity.

Once there is peace in Ukraine, local Rotarians will visit with some of these team members and assess how they will be able to offer helps and assistance.



The Rotary Club of Concord and Pleasant Hill organized the delegation from Ukraine as part of the Open World Program.

Michael Barrington is a local author, www.mbwriter.net. His upcoming novel 'The Baron of Bengal Street' will be published in January 2023.

Photos by Susan Wood, [Susan Wood Photography](http://SusanWoodPhotography.com), susan@susanwoodphotography.com



Holiday Potato Dish 154 year ago

Most of our holiday celebrations are rooted in traditions including our dinners. So, I was particularly delighted when I found this holiday recipe published in the Contra Costa Gazette on December 1, 1866. Wouldn't this make an interesting addition to the family dinner table by re-introducing this early settler dish?

Cold mashed potatoes make excellent side dishes. The simplest of which is this; stir an egg or two with your potatoes; add a few finely powdered spices, pepper and salt to taste, and some minced parsley, mix well, and then roll the mixture into balls or any shape you like. Cover with fine bread-crumbs, then fry until a nice golden color and serve garnished with fried parsley.

This dish can be varied by inserting in the middle of each ball, or incorporating with the mixture, any of the following: the flesh of fowls or game, any kind of fish lobsters, crabs, etc., all finely minced.

If you have some very rich stock moisten the minced meat or fish with it, and your dish will be improved. Only, in that case you must put a small portion of the mixture in each ball, and hot mix it up with the potatoes. The above combination can be erected into a more imposing dish, placing the minced meat or fish in a pie dish, and covering over with the potatoes, then baking until the top is of

POTATO DISHES.—Cold mashed potatoes make excellent little side dishes, the simplest of which is this: Stir an egg or two with your potatoes; and a few finely powdered spices, pepper and salt to taste, and some minced parsley; mix well, and roll the mixture into balls, or any shape you like; cover with fine bread-crumbs, fry a nice golden color, and serve garnished with fried parsley. This dish can be varied *ad infinitum*, by either inserting in the middle of each ball, or incorporating with the mixture, any of the following: The flesh of fowls or game, any kind of fish lobsters, crabs, etc., all finely minced. If you have some very rich stock, moisten the minced meat or fish with it, and your dish will be improved: only, in that case, you must put a small portion of the mixture in each ball, and hot mix it up in the potatoes. The above combinations can be erected into a more imposing dish by placing the minced meat or fish in a pie dish, and covering over with potatoes, then baking until the top is of the desired color: in this case however a regular ragout should be made for the animal part of the dish, and the potatoes only play second fiddle.—*Ladies Book.*

the desired color. In this case, however, a regular ragout should be made for the animal part of the dish, and the potatoes only play second fiddle. -Ladies Book

Sources: Source Contra Costa Gazette December 1, 1866

12TH ANNUAL GIVE BACK PROGRAM

Together we are making a difference!



MDRR is donating \$5 for each newly signed-up customer using EFT or auto-pay for their account.

\$5 donation for each auto pay

That's ten meals per sign up!



All proceeds will be donated to:



sign up by 12/31/2022

Holiday Schedule

For the week of Christmas and New Year's, there will be **no change** in service.

Please have your collection containers out for pick-up on your regular service day.



Our Recycling Center & Transfer Station (RCTS) will be **CLOSED** on Christmas Day & New Year's Day
www.mdr.com/rcts.

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Neuroplasticity
by Jessica Raaum Foster,
NeurologyofPresence.com

Rewire Your Nervous System to Overcome Anxiety and Depression

For some people, anxiety is actually instigated by their nervous system itself. If traditional methods like talk therapy are not solving your anxiety or depression, then maybe it's time to get under the hood and take a look at your wiring.

Here's why your brain may be creating this experience for you:

SAFETY: At a neurological level, your brain cares more about your survival than how you feel. Your brain deems any functional deficits in your nervous system as a threat to your survival, and it will throw on the brakes in order to stop you from getting hurt.

Vision or vestibular training or improving your movement skills is like upgrading your navigation system and can help you feel way more secure.

FUEL: Deficits in your nervous system, especially in the visual or vestibular systems, can make navigating life in a physical world extremely challenging. Just moving through the world can drain your energy reserves, making it difficult to inhibit any anxiety-induced narratives that run through your head, and leaving you very little mojo even for the things that bring you joy.

Your anxious brain may need more fuel: O2 and glucose. Breathwork and proper nutrition are key to overcoming anxiety.

WARNING SIGNAL: When it comes to problems in your nervous system, your brain will typically bypass your cognitive mind and use heightened emotions to signal to you that something is wrong. This can leave your mind scrambling to find a rational reason for what is creating anxiety and may amplify the gravity of your given circumstances in order to make sense of your feelings.

Understanding that these feelings are physical can help ease an anxious mind.

ACTIVATION: If you have functional deficits in your nervous system, your brain may be missing the stimulation that it needs for survival. Underactive areas of the brain can start to become hyperactive in the form of excess thoughts, movement, or unwanted physical experiences in an effort to stay activated.

Small doses of movement throughout your day can give your brain the activation it needs.

If you have unsuccessfully tried traditional modalities for treating your anxiety, **YOU ARE NOT DONE YET.** Work to rewire your nervous system so you can run on all cylinders.

Jessica Raaum Foster is a Neuro Performance Coach. For more information: www.NeurologyofPresence.com, IG: @JessicaRaaumFoster, FB: @NeurologyofPresence

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CVCHS Celebrates 2022-23 National Honor Society Inductees

In November, we recognized 45 amazing Clayton Valley Charter High School students. I was honored to address our 2022-23 National Honor Society (NHS) inductees and their families at an evening celebration on November 8.

NHS is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. To be recognized, students must maintain at least a 3.5 unweighted GPA; demonstrate scholarship, leadership, service and character both on and off campus; earn at least 30 hours of community service at the time of application; and write a short essay. NHS recognizes students in grades 10-12 for membership.

Today, it is estimated that more than one million students participate nationally. NHS challenges CVCHS students to develop further through active involvement in school activities and community service. Currently, CVCHS's NHS students are sponsoring a food drive for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. You can drop off items in the barrel located in the CVCHS Front Office. I encourage everyone to check their pantries or shop for items using the checklist provided. Thank you for your generous support in advance.

Addressing our students was truly a personal honor – as well as a wonderful opportunity for our school community to celebrate the choices, and oftentimes the sacrifices, these amazing students make. Thank you to Ms. Robin Travenick, our NHS faculty advisor, as well as CVCHS families for their support and encouragement.

Here is a small excerpt of my speech



NHS inductees for the CVCHS 2022-23 academic school year

which emphasizes what our students accomplished to become NHS members.

“So, let’s talk a little about the four requirements for membership in which you have excelled: leadership, scholarship, character and service.

The most important thing to remember is that each of these equals the sum of many individual decisions. They embody a positive attitude backed by purpose – small, positive actions every day. And in the end, they all add up.

Leadership means the influence you have on people to do something extraordinary. A leader is someone who is not afraid to stand by their decision even if no one else is standing by them. They have a drive to change the world into something better.

Scholarship is about having an intellectual curiosity that drives one to not only enjoy learning new things, but to also have the persistence and

integrity to apply oneself to understanding difficult concepts.

Character means having the qualities of honesty, courage and integrity. Character is not something that can be taught, but rather something that must be modeled through example.

And finally, Service -- an essential part of the National Honor Society. Service is to truly help one another – a value that can never afford to be lost within our complex society. Each of us must strive to provide service to the surrounding East Bay communities we live.”

Congratulations to our NHS inductees for the 2022-23 academic school year: Sofia Ahmadi, Naod Araya, Joshua Arrienda, Jacob Banta, Ruby Bartholomew, Shannon Battlke, Olivia Burnham, Abigayle Callahan, Eric Catalano, Grace Cleary, Jerry Coakley, Mariah Crawford, Lucas Dean, Elyssa Dela Pena, Zev Deladingco, Brian

Doolittle, Carly Fassio, Livi Flamino, Allison Fuentes, Alexis Gaddis, David Giordano, Jodi Glaiza, Crystal Hac, Kai Leigh Hernandez, Corinne Jeandheur, Connor Juricich, Chase Kennerly, Sophia Litueva, Ashwin Loganathan, Cami McGee, Francisco Nguyen, Kelsey Ogu, Fernando Perez, Anja Perreira, Malia Quesada, Kalena Raman, Logan Remington, Sayan Saha, Madi Santos, Anika Scott, Tate Suh, Avonlea Sutton, Alyssa Teixeira, Emilia Vega-Ortiz, and Jade Vu.

To learn more about our great high school, key enrollment dates, and information, visit <https://www.claytonvalley.org>. We look forward to your family becoming a part of our Ugly Eagle family next year!

Food Drive Shopping List

Help the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano provide nutritious, nonperishable food items like the ones listed below.

- Natural Peanut Butter
- Whole Grain Cereals
- Hearty Low Sodium Soups
- Beans and Lentils (dry or canned)
- Canned Tuna and Chicken in Water
- Canned Fruit in Juice
- Nonperishable Low Sodium Ready to Eat Meals (chili, ravioli, etc.)
- Low Sodium Canned Vegetables
- Brown Rice
- Whole Wheat/Grain Pasta
- Canned Tomato Products

www.foodbankccs.org



Left to right : Clayton Valley Charter High School Fall Freshman team (Black) and the CV Fall JV Baseball team (Blue) . Coaches standing left to right are Herc Pardi , Chris Snyder left hand side and John Dean and Jesse Medrano on the right.



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Views of the Valley by Mikah



200 native oak and buckeye trees were planted at Lime Ridge Open Space Sat. Nov.5, by Friends of Lime Ridge



Contra Costa Cake and Sugar Art Society, Cake and Sugar Art Show at the Concord Historical Society Heritage Center. Cakes, cupcakes, cookies and confectionery art. Sweet.



Concord City Council joined in with Mayor Dominic Aliano in the Mayor's Sing-Along at Todos Santos Park for the Tree lighting ceremony Dec. 2.

Pleasant Hill Lite Up the Night Tree Lighting Festival on Nov. 16



Jennifer Stojanovich of Better Homes Realty treated many residents to Horse and Carriage rides in the rain downtown Clayton on Dec. 3.



Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society show brought hordes of enthusiasts at Centre Concord on Nov. 5 and 6



Ice Skating at The Verandah, Concord



Concord Visitor Center First Annual Perro (Dog) Costume Contest and Parade through Salvio Pacheco Square. Was there a cuteness award?



Long lines withstood the wet weather for the opening of Nick the Greek Souvlaki and Gyros House at Clayton Valley Shopping Center, 5458 Ygnacio Valley Rd. on November 8.



Pleasant Hill Lite Up the Night Tree lighting Festival included Santa.



One thousand participants entered the Concord Turkey Trot at Newhall Park on Thanksgiving morning, to benefit Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa.

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