

Annual Audubon Bird Count
 Reveals Impact from Wildfires

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Photo by CSK Photography

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from the Publisher



David King

FREE LUNCH

Concord residents, one of us can start the new year with a FREE LUNCH. In Councilman Edi Birsan's column on page 15, "Resolutions Are a Bear", he has made a few resolutions for all of us. If you can be the first to identify the location of the stump-carved bear in the photo, he will treat you and your guest to lunch at a Concord restaurant of your choice. Just e-mail him your answer.

Resolutions are noble self-help notions. By nature, they are personal; get organized, lose weight, exercise, etc. A few succeed, but I can't recall the last time any of mine have. That is why this year I Googled "top resolutions for the New Year." (because who knows more about oneself than Google?) The suggestion I liked best was "be helpful" from a list published in Inc. Magazine. That sounds easy. It did warn against the wrong ways to approach helping others, which I skimmed over.

So, here I sit in my ivory tower of helpfulness. To start, I will assign resolutions to everyone else in my family. Imagine their cries of appreciation. Finally, a resolution that I can live with. I can tell this is going to be a great year. May 2019 by your best year yet too!

**Happy
New
Year!**

Looking Forward to 2019

by Micah

You can't help but wonder what a new year may bring. Here are some of the more exciting announcements that we can look forward to in 2019.

3D PRINTING FOR ALL. Expect 2019 to be the year 3D printing comes into the mainstream. 3D bioprinting in the medical field, advanced 3D metal printing which will revolutionize manufacturing, and more accessible 3D printing at home. Xerox will also getting into the 3D printing game and has plans to develop an at-home 3D printer this year.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY. If you travel to Europe, expect a lot of meaningful ceremonies and events to mark these two important moments of peace. Some travel companies will be offering special tours to mark the anniversaries.

July will mark the **50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE APOLLO 11 MISSION** (which put the first two men on the moon.) The USS Hornet served as the recovery vessel for the Apollo 11 & 12 lunar landing missions. The USS Hornet has several celebratory events planned in Alameda in 2019. View their calendar of events at www.uss-hornet.org/.

GRAND CANYON TURNS 100. Grand Canyon is way older than that, say 6 million years, but 2019 will mark its 100th birthday as a national park. The National Park Service is planning a year of celebrations for the centennial.

SAMSUNG WILL RELEASE A FOLDABLE PHONE which was unveiled to developers at a conference in November. This



folding phone could be out as soon as March. The phone will have a bendable glass screen that uses new technology called Infinity Flex Display and will look like a tablet when it's fully opened and your usual smart-phone when it's closed.

5G LAPTOPS ARE COMING from companies like Dell and Intel. Soon you will be able to go Online on your laptop and never need Wi-Fi again because you're instantly connected wherever you are. You don't need "storage" because all of your data is available anywhere, at any time, at any volume.

PORSCHE WILL RELEASE ITS ELECTRIC CAR. It's called a Taycan and everything about it will be fast including how long it takes to charge. Most electric car chargers take about 30 minutes to reach 170 miles of driving range, but the Taycan will get you a 250-mile range in just 15 minutes of charging.

PRIVATE SPACE FLIGHTS. Virgin Galactic's recent successful test flight where they soared to an altitude of 51.4 miles over the Mojave Desert sparked some excitement. It is unknown if you'll be able to buy a ticket to space in 2019, but we definitely are closer than ever. Virgin Galactic founder and billionaire Richard Branson says that he personally plans to be in space by mid-year.

MORE FREE DAYS TO VISIT NATIONAL PARKS. The National Park Service recently announced that they've increased the number of days in which visitors can visit the country's national parks free of charge. There are now five days, including Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 21 to Veterans Day on November 11, where you won't have to pay the \$5 to \$33 rate to enter the 400 nationwide parks.

Have a safe, healthy, successful and enjoyable 2019.

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Annual Audubon Bird Count Reveals Unlikely Impact from Wildfires

by Jill Hedgecock, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club | www.jillhedgecock.com

Birds have been an indication of environmental health ever since caged canaries were carried into coal mines to assess air quality. Thanks to the Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which began on Christmas Day 1900, it remains possible to get an annual indication of how nature is faring. This year, the count information gave a glimpse as to whether extensive wildfires affected our local birds.

On December 15th, CBC's organizer, Elizabeth Leite of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society (MDAS), coordinated bird-count volunteers for fifteen areas of Central Contra Costa County. For the former Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) area, a group of five birders were led by Ted Robertson, an experienced naturalist who works as a



burrowing owl poking its head out of a hole, and the rare tricolored blackbirds (TRBLs), another target bird. According to the All About Birds website, TRBLs have declined dramatically since the 1930s when there were around 2-3 million as compared to about 300,000 currently. Some common species offered impressive observations, such as the sheer number of rock pigeons observed in a single flock (about 800). And the fascinating mating display of a male Anna's

hummingbird which involves a rapid vertical ascent followed by plummeting to the earth at speeds of to 60 miles per hour.

up Volunteers spotted a peregrine falcon and three great-horned owls along a canal as their favorite sightings. At the end of the day, we had seen 64 different bird species.

The results from the fifteen areas were combined that evening during the count dinner. The overall number of species dropped in 2018 (144 species) versus 146 seen in 2017 and down from 151 species in 2016. It's important to look at why the numbers decreased and not to jump to a premature conclusion such as the birds died in the wildfires. In this case, several species not found this year were a result of birders being denied access to an area



Ted Robertson leading the birders counting group.

biologist on the property.

After instructing volunteers how to log their count data, Ted went on to list target species such as burrowing owl and ferruginous hawk that the five volunteers should watch

for because they often only occur in the CNWS area of the count circle. We were then split into partners to maximize coverage of seven square miles over the next nine hours. Despite the long duration, none of the volunteers wavered in their enthusiasm.

"This is so much fun,"

my partner, Juan-Carlos, exclaimed while peering into a spotting scope for raptors.

Brian Murphy, who has spent 10+ years of participating on this particular count, was excited about exploring the eaves of an old building for barn owls, while Mike Robertson and Doug Thompson grinned at their sighting of Wilson's snipe, another CNWS target bird.

One of the best birds found was a blue-gray gnatcatcher, a species never before documented on the CNWS property and only seen 11 times during the count in the last 25 CBCs. Other highlights included sightings of four ferruginous hawks, a



with unique habitat. In years past, MDAS had been allowed to count birds along the shoreline of this property. Species historically seen in the area, such as the spotted sandpiper, is most likely still present, but was simply not able to be viewed by birding volunteers.

While the bird species as a whole appear to have weathered the wildfires, another challenge awaits. The future for the wildlife living in the former CNWS is unknown. The Navy has done an excellent job of preserving areas inhabited by endangered amphibians such as the California Tiger Salamander on the former base, but the planned



commercial and residential development may take its toll. While East Bay Regional Parks will be stewards for half of the acreage of CNWS, the overall loss of habitat may result in reduced bird populations due to fewer available nesting sites or reduced prey availability. No doubt populations of bird species that thrive around humans, such as crows, will increase, but time will tell what the cumulative effects on the numbers of

species needing wide open spaces such as loggerhead shrikes will be. Hopefully, future MDAS CBCs can provide insights into how development projects can lessen impacts to nature. To learn more about MDAS visit <https://www.diabloaudubon.org>.

Photos by Jill Hedgecock and Ted Robertson
ferruginous hawk by Juan-Carlos Slois

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Adopt-A-Street Program Brings Pride and Beauty to Neighborhoods

More than a month has passed since I was honored to accept the gavel and the title of “Mayor of the City of Concord” on December 4, 2018. As promised during my acceptance speech, I will continue to strive each day to serve the people of Concord to the best of my ability in this new role.

As Mayor, I look forward to introducing several initiatives in the coming year. One goal focuses on building a sense of community. I want residents to feel pride in being a Concordian, living here, working here, shopping here, and celebrating here. Neighborhood meetings and community cleanup events are two excellent ways to build positive relationships and a sense of place. In both cases, residents come together to focus on a common issue impacting their neighborhood and take action to improve the situation.

Over the past several years, I have helped to convene quarterly neighborhood meetings and cleanup events throughout the city. Already, as Mayor, I have participated in a creek clean up and native grass planting at Clayton Valley Drain in North Concord, in partnership with the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conversation District and Restoration Trust. It was heartening to see so many volunteers come out on a cold Saturday morning to help clean up the creek and plant native grasses, and I look forward to expanding such efforts to additional neighborhoods in the coming year.

One way to increase the number of city cleanup events is to initiate more Adopt-A-Street efforts. What is Concord’s Adopt-A-Street Program? It enables concerned citizens and businesses to actively participate in enhancing our city’s appearance and cleanliness. Interested groups, such as Boy and Girl Scout troops, churches, service clubs, private businesses, or neighborhood associations can adopt a minimum half-mile section of one of Concord’s key thoroughfares. Volunteers make a commitment to remove trash along their designated sections of city streets a minimum of four times per year for a two-year period and are encouraged to monitor conditions on their section of the street and report problems to city staff.

In return for conducting scheduled clean-ups of their adopted stretch of street four times a year, participating organizations are recognized with signage



that includes the Adopt-A-Street Program logo, the City of Concord logo, and the volunteer group’s name. The signage is installed at the beginning and end of the volunteer group’s designated street sections. Signs are installed after the group’s fourth clean-up event has been held and will remain in place for the designated adoption period of two years.

You will be provided with a Volunteer Service Agreement and an Adopt-A-Street Agreement. Completed forms are reviewed by Code Enforcement Unit staff and processed. If a proposal is approved, the Adopt-A-Street Coordinator will schedule a safety orientation and dates for the four annual clean-ups with the organization’s lead contact person. Prior to all clean-up events, the Adopt-A-Street Coordinator will meet the group at the designated clean-up site, distribute supplies and equipment, and review safety procedures.

For more information, contact the Adopt-A-Street Coordinator at the



Concord Police Department Code Enforcement Unit at (925) 671-3075. More information, including a map of street locations targeted for cleanup, is also available at: www.ci.concord.ca.us/page.asp?pid=1020



New Exhibit and Viewing Deck Pays Homage to Redwoods

The East Bay Regional Park District and Save the Redwoods League unveiled an Old Growth Redwood Heritage Viewing Deck and Interpretive Exhibit at Roberts Regional Recreation Area. The exhibit, found along Roberts Ridge Trail, preserves and protects a remaining 18-foot diameter old-growth coast redwood footprint (stump) and includes a 570-square-foot observation deck with interpretive panels. The exhibit is free and open to redwood lovers and the public 365 days a year.

“These towering, majestic coast redwoods are one of the greatest natural treasures in the East Bay,” said East Bay Regional Park District General Manager Robert Doyle.

“For years, the East Bay Regional Park District has been working in partnership with the Save the Redwoods League to protect these magnificent trees and pay homage to their past through conservation and education.”

“The new exhibit protects the old-growth footprint for future generations and allows for expanded educational programs on redwoods and climate change,” added Doyle.

Redwoods are an important part of the entire Bay Area’s history. From the early to mid-1800s, a group of especially tall redwood trees known as the “Navigation



Trees” served as landmarks that helped ships avoid underwater hazards and guided them safely through the San Francisco Bay. The Navigation Trees are no longer alive today but leave an everlasting legacy in the Bay Area. Nearly all old-growth redwoods in the East Bay were cut down by 1860 to construct homes and buildings.

“This new exhibit sparks the imagination, giving park visitors a glimpse into the forest of massive, ancient coast redwoods that once thrived in the East Bay,” said League President and CEO Sam Hodder.

“We’re honored to unveil this exhibit to teach park visitors about the tallest trees in the world that once towered from these hills—and how they’re growing back as we speak.”

The giant redwood footprint has been a literal hidden gem at Roberts Regional Recreation Area for more than a century with limited opportunities to learn about its history and past.



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Fireplace Maintenance Keeps Homes Safe and Cozy

Is there anything cozier than a wood-burning fireplace on a cold winter's night? Maybe it's what sold you on our current house. Or perhaps it's a wish list item for the house you'd like to buy in 2019. Although fireplaces can be charming and cost-saving features, they do require regular maintenance to keep them working safely and efficiently. Here's what you need to know.

Safety First. Fireplaces add wonderful warmth and ambiance to your home, but let's be honest. They can also be a potential source of a house fire. Keep these safety tips in mind when operating your wood-burning fireplace:

Don't leave a fire unattended in your fireplace, especially when children are around.

Open a window when using the fireplace to keep the room free from smoke.

Use a screen in front of the fireplace to keep embers from landing on surfaces in the room.

Use a fireproof hearth rug in front of your fireplace to ensure that it won't catch on fire or melt if a spark or ember lands on it.

If you have glass doors on your fireplace, be sure they are open when the fireplace is in use. It allows cool air to be drawn in and up the chimney.

Use fireplace tools when handling burning logs or coals.

Make sure you have a chimney cap to keep animals, debris, and water out of your chimney.

Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home and make sure they always have fresh batteries.

Only burn seasoned hardwood like

birch, ash, maple and oak that has been dried under cover for at least six months. This wood burns long and hot and causes less creosote buildup. Green wood and soft woods will not burn as well and will create more creosote buildup.

Maintain your fireplace. In order to keep your fireplace working safely, it requires regular maintenance. This includes removing ashes from the firebox when they become deeper than an inch. Wait at least three days before removing them, as coals can remain hot for that long. They should go directly in the trash, or they can be sprinkled on flowerbeds to add essential nutrients to your soil. Never vacuum the ashes and always wear a mask and gloves.

Monitoring your fireplace throughout the season for signs of creosote and soot. If you notice more than 1/8 inch of buildup, you need to call in a professional to have it cleaned.

Test your fireplace each time you make a fire by lighting a few small pieces of wood. Check to see if the smoke rises vertically up into the chimney. If not, check that the damper is open. If smoke still fills the room, have the chimney inspected and cleaned.

Finally, in addition to the regular maintenance you perform throughout the season, you should also complete a couple of essential annual chores. Have your fireplace cleaned and inspected by a professional chimney sweep. A basic cleaning will cost anywhere from \$150 to \$350. This should be done every year at the end of the burning season, more often if you use your fireplace regularly. Also, inspect your chimney cap and repair or replace as necessary.

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movie review

by Jeffrey Anderson, Common Sense Media



"VICE"

4/5 STARS In "Vice", Young Dick Cheney (Christian Bale) is a hard drinker and a bar brawler; he gets thrown out of Yale and winds up in jail for drunk driving. His girlfriend, Lynne (Amy Adams), gives him an ultimatum, and Cheney agrees to straighten up. He becomes a congressional intern, starts working with Donald Rumsfeld (Steve Carell), and holds several positions in the White House, eventually losing his job when Jimmy Carter is elected president. Years later, Cheney is approached by George W. Bush (Sam Rockwell) to be Bush's running mate. Cheney reluctantly agrees, but only after he convinces Bush to let him take on some of the larger, "duller" responsibilities of the office of the president. When the 9/11 attacks occur, Cheney senses an opportunity to turn his position into one of enormous power, forever changing the way politics are played.

A comedy veteran, writer/director Adam McKay brings a strong irreverence and some quirky humor to this biopic, yet it can't disguise its sheer outrage; its laughs come through open-mouthed dismay. McKay uses a variety of unexpected tools in Vice, including a surprising narrator choice and offbeat little inserts and alternate realities (the movie has a funny false ending halfway

through). An opening crawl claims that the movie is a true story, then says that since Cheney was so secretive, they just did the best they could. These touches help get the story down more easily, and certainly the tone often teeters toward satirical, which feels almost like vindication. But some viewers will still feel helplessly furious.

As with his previous drama, "The Big Short", McKay sets aside the clean, colorful look of his comedies (the "Anchorman" movies, etc.) in favor of a washed-out, edgy look, with frequent use of hand-held cameras.

The enormous canvas requires many helping hands, and viewers will find amazing actors in even the smallest roles. In bigger parts, Adams, Carell, and Rockwell do admirable work, but their roles are sidelined and not as fully fleshed out as the central one. Playing Cheney, Bale more than disappears. He hides; it's not a particularly personal performance, but it's skillful and highly effective. All in all, Vice feels like a much-needed, cleansing primal scream at politics.

Now showing. Cast: Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Sam Rockwell, Steve Carell. Director: Adam McKay. Rated R, frequent strong language, flashes of violence, including images of war, bombings, shooting, and torture, nonsexual nudity, drinking and smoking.



Out to Lunch

Lima Restaurant

by Richard Eber | Photos by Eric Zhang

The only time the City of Concord and Michelin have ever been mentioned in the same breath has been over the discussion of tires distributed there. Being associated with the restaurant rating service "Michelin", well that has been an elusive matter.

However, Concord continues to build a reputation for hosting fine dining destinations as more high-quality restaurants open each year. One such place that may merit Michelin consideration is Lima, located adjacent to Todos Santos Park.

Such regard is the product of the culinary affiliations associated with Lima Owner/Chef John Marquez. Prior to starting an authentic Peruvian restaurant in Concord, he worked with famed chef Gaston Acuria in Peru. Growing up in Danville, Marquez obtained a degree in Culinary Arts while doing an apprenticeship at Bridges in Danville under Kevin Gin. He also worked extensively with Thomas Keller of French Laundry fame in Napa.

When one enters Lima, it is easy to be captivated by this Peruvian bistro. It is a unique combination of Spanish; Italian, Inca, Japanese, and Chinese cuisines. Marquez uses fresh sea food, imported aji amarillo peppers, cumin, purple corn, numerous varieties of potatoes, and a large fresh fruit/vegetable assortment as prime components of Lima's menu.

One example that flows over several boundaries is Lima's Arroz con Mariscos. It is Peruvian seafood paella

menu.

In addition to main courses, they offer a wide variety of appetizers including a version of fried calamari, ceviche, homemade empanadas, and assorted unique salads utilizing native corn, beets, potatoes, peas, carrots, peppers, and selected produce.

For more thrifty patrons, Lima offers a fair-priced lunch special that costs in the neighborhood of \$12.50 per person including tea or soft drink. I have tried their version of Adobo de Chanco which is tender stewed pork shoulder immersed in Peruvian spices. It is covered with spicy slivers of pickled red onion and roasted vegetables with a side of rice and



salad.

We have also tasted their Peruvian style Philly- french dip and fries. There are so many juicy items inside the roll that you will need to use your knife and fork to eat this delicious sandwich.

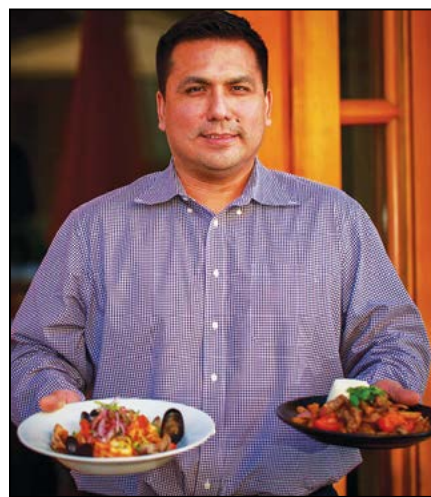
Along with exquisite food, Lima offers a full bar including native Peruvian drinks with their version of sours, punches, and concoctions using Pisco, a yellowish-amber brandy first introduced by the Spanish Conquistadors.

They also have a dessert menu of unique house-made offerings not to be found elsewhere. Their sweet potato and butternut squash donuts are amazing. The Lacuma fruit cake, (lacuma is a fruit found only in Peru) has a spicy yet delicate flavor.

Lima also has a decent but somewhat pricy wine list primarily featuring vintages from South America. They serve local beers on tap and a Peruvian lager. Non-alcoholic patrons should try their special Chicha Morada. This cocktail is made from boiling red corn with sugar, giving it a dark purplish color. Pineapple, lime, and cinnamon are added and then it is served chilled in a wine glass. Its distinctive flavors go well with Peruvian foods.

Come in early evening and enjoy their happy hour Monday thru Friday from 4-6 pm which features discounts on drinks and appetizers.

It would seem that everything connected to Lima restaurant can be attributed to the detailed handiwork of owner John Marquez. Hopefully, as the restaurant enters its third year of operation, it will soon obtain recognition from Michelin. In the meantime, patrons of Lima can enjoy some of the best food in our area. Reservations are recommended, especially on the weekends.



with grilled prawns, octopus, mussels, and calamari, served over a bed of risotto infused with a Peruvian pepper sauce. Its artistic presentation matches its taste.

Another noteworthy dish Lima offers is Arroz Chaufa which is a Peruvian stir-fried rice served with a selection of meats and sea food. They all incorporate native spices with heavy Far East influences. I also tried their Lomo Saltado which is seasoned chunks of beef filet on top of a tomato, onion, and fries medley served with a fragrant portion of jasmine rice.

There are so many diverse offerings at Lima. Choose from great seafood, lamb shanks, steaks, and even a wonderful half chicken which is first marinated in a beer, garlic, cumin, and pepper mixture before being roasted to order. You will need to make several visits to appreciate their complete

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

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

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OUTDOORS

USS Hornet Museum



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Farmers' Markets

Concord Tuesdays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, rain or shine.

Martinez Sundays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, Main St. and Estudillo.

Walnut Creek Diablo Valley Farmers Market Saturday 9a.m. - 1 p.m. Shadelands Business Park, N. Wiggett Lane and Mitchell Dr. Also, from

Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market - North Locust St between Giama and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round, (925) 431-8361 <http://www.cccfm.org>

THE VERANDA

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 18:

ICE AT THE VERANDA Ice skating in front of Luxe theater. All dates & times are weather permitting. Follow @ShopTheVeranda on social media for

up-to-date info. To contact the Ice at The Veranda, please call (925) 434-8466 or email them at theveranda@icerinkevents.com. Hours and prices go to www.shoptheveranda.com. 2001 Diamond Blvd. Concord.

THROUGH JANUARY 21 WALNUT CREEK ON ICE

GENERAL PUBLIC SKATING HOURS
 MONDAY-THURSDAY 12 PM – 8 PM
 FRIDAY 12 PM – 11 PM
 SATURDAY 11 AM – 11 PM
 SUNDAY 11 AM – 8 PM
 CIVIC PARK
 1365 CIVIC DRIVE WALNUT CREEK.

JANUARY 18-27

2ND ANNUAL CONCORD COMFORT FOOD WEEK. A perfect time to indulge in modern and classic comfort cuisine. 30+ participating Concord eateries put their unique spin on the concept of “comfort.” Think free chocolate lava cake with dinner at Bambino’s Italian. No tickets necessary – just ask for the Concord Comfort Food Restaurant Week menu to get started on comfort eating. Here’s how it works. Each participating restaurant will provide a featured menu item reflecting comfort with their culinary diversity.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARKS

JANUARY 26 & FEBRUARY 2 5TH ANNUAL YOUTH JOB FAIR. Love Parks? Think about a Career at East Bay Regional Parks. Currently hiring: Building/Grounds Aide, Fuels Reduction Coordinator, Interpretive Student Aide, and Police Officer. 1/26 at Big Break Visitor Center. 10 a.m. to noon. 69 Big Break Road, Oakley 2/2 Ruggieri Senior Center. 10 a.m. to noon. 33997 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City

CLUB/SUPPORT Groups' NEWS AND EVENTS

Home Wise 2019 - FREE Financial Seminar. Industry experts will answer questions on how to manage wealth, income and healthcare at home. Topics will include financial resources for future retirement, downsizing, reverse mortgage options, finding a realtor, home mortgages, understanding home care and community resources to help you remain living at home.

Saturday, 1/26 0:30-12:00 PM

Saturday, 1/31 5:30-7:00 PM at Lafayette Library, Oak Room 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette.

To register call 925.627.3096 Presented by: members of Mt. Diablo Business Women

JANUARY 16

20th Annual Walnut Creek / East Bay Career Fair. Wednesday 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

Meet, sit down and interview with Fortune 500 employers at Walnut Creek's Career Fair. Professional Dress (suit & tie or business suit) Bring plenty of resumes. Walnut Creek Marriott. 2355 North Main St.

JANUARY 19

John McCutcheon at Devil Mountain Coffee House. 8:00 PM – 11:00 PM. John McCutcheon is one of the most respected folksingers and has garnered seven Grammy nominations. He has produced over twenty albums. Mt Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church. 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek

JANUARY 21

28th Martin Luther King Day Celebration. 12 noon-2pm.



“What Does God Require - a Prescription For Systematic Change.” by Guest Speaker, the inspirational and nationally reknown Rev Dr. Yvette Flunder, Senior Pastor of the City of Refuge UCC congregation in Oakland and Bishop of the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. Bishop Flunder has for many years made her voice heard for justice from churches to the White House and on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court. She has continued to carry out Dr. King’s unfinished agenda and remains a powerful proponent of inclusivity supporting the LGBTQ community. She has been portrayed in the ABC mini Series “When We Rise” and in a film on Netflix “Come Sunday”. Includes music, refreshments, local and national politicians. Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave., Walnut Creek.

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

January 12

Shellie Awards Presented by the Leshner Center for the Arts. Patterned after Broadway’s Tony awards, the Shellies honor over 120 individuals and their work in musical and non-musical theatrical productions that took place between September 1 2017 and August 31, 2018. 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

aRT Cottage

JANUARY 12-26 ART Classes Join one of our talented local artists for an exciting class - learn a new technique, play with different mediums, take home a creative work of art! Seating is limited to 6-8 students per class. For more info or registration to any of the classes listed below, go to <http://artscottage.blogspot.com/>.

Saturday 1/12: 1-3pm. Paint Pouring with Pat Calabro. Learn the basics of this exciting painting trend! \$25 extra for supplies if needed.

Sunday 1/13: 1-4pm . Art Crayon Techniques with Lisa Fulmer. Learn 5 different ways to work with Marabu Art Crayons. All supplies included.

Friday 1/18: 6-8pm. Floral Study 1 with Deena Sheranko. Learn to quickly sketch and color flowers with watercolor and ink. All supplies included.

Saturday 1/19: 1-4pm. Gel Plate Printing with Pat Viera. Learn

the basics of making gel prints on paper. Most supplies included; bring your own gel plate or buy one from Pat for an extra \$25.

Saturday 1/19: 6-8pm. Floral Study 2 with Deena Sheranko. Learn to quickly sketch with watercolor and ink. All supplies included.

Thursday 1/24: 6-8pm. Make Your Own Font with Alex Savakis. Develop your own handwriting into creative digital lettering. Supplies and digi-conversion included.

Friday 1/25: 6-9pm. Sip & Uncork Your Creativity with Cheryl Jones. Make an adorable serving tray with wine corks. All supplies (and wine!) included.

Saturday 1/26: 1-3pm The Magic of Alcohol Inks with Laurie Mansur. Learn how to paint a landscape, a floral or an abstract composition. All supplies included.

JANUARY 18

The Jazz Room: Jim Caruso’s Cast party with Billy Stritch at the piano! 8pm.



Cast Party is a wildly popular happening that has brought Broadway glitz and urbane wit Village Theatre. A hilariously impromptu variety show and open mic. You just never know WHO will show up! Village Theatre 233 Front Street, Danville 925.314.340

JANUARY 21

Live Comedy Night at Vinnies Bar and Grill. 7:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Featuring host: Mean Dave

FEBRUARY 7

The Jazz Room: Broadway Lights - And All That Jazz. Lisa Lindsley will entertain you with her brand of humor, love songs, and beloved tunes plucked from the longest running musicals of all time. An eclectic and humorous Broadway/Cabaret show with the Mike Greensill Trio. From My Fair Lady to Wicked. One night only at The Jazz Room in Danville. 233 Front St.

FEBRUARY 1-2

Diablo Ballet Presents “Balanchine and Beyond” 2/1 at 8pm and 2/2 at 2 pm. Followed by a dessert and coffee reception. Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. TICKETS: (925) 943-7469; www.lesherartscenter.org, www.diabloballet.org



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DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

I Sneaked My Deceased Brother Into a Todd Rundgren Concert

by David King

I realize the headline reads like a “Weekend at Bernie’s” sequel. This tale of Clayton residents Robert and Jason Chislett, the ice sculptors of Chisel-It Ice Company in Concord is almost as surreal, but in fact, actually happened.

In the 70s and 80’s, Todd Rundgren and his band Utopia had quite the run of success. Songs such as “Hello It’s Me”, “I Saw the Light”, and “Bang the Drum All Day” were radio hits.

Robert and his brothers, David and Terry, became avid Todd Rundgren fans.

A groundbreaking favorite of the 70’s was their theatrical electric fairytale composition, “Singring and the Glass Guitar.”

It was this latter song that David raved over after witnessing the performance at a Todd Rundgren and Utopia concert. The song ended with a smashing of a “glass” guitar on stage.

“That image of a shattering guitar always stuck with me over the years,” Robert confessed.

Much had transpired with the Chisletts over the next 40 plus years. Terry, passed away a few years ago.

Having already lost his mother, Terry’s son, Jason, decided to move from New York to Clayton. He now works



with his uncle Robert at Chisel-It Ice. Terry’s ashes were also transported to Clayton.

When Todd Rundgren and Utopia reunited and announced their 2018 tour, Robert could not wait to take Jason to the concert to experience one of his father’s favorite bands. Fortunately, one of the stops on the tour was San Francisco’s Masonic Center.

As a tribute to honor both Terry and to the iconic “Glass Guitar”, Robert decided to make an ice guitar to take to the concert. No detail was spared. The ice guitar contained the bands eye logo and colors. It also contained Terry.

Robert had placed some of Terry’s ashes inside the cavity of the ice gui-

tar. Robert had no plans what was next, just his vision that his ice guitar sculpture would somehow be on display somewhere at the concert.

Robert and Jason arrived at the Masonic Center a couple of hours early toting the ice guitar in a large box. Robert approached the Masonic Center operations staff with the box and asked if they would be interested in putting the guitar on display somewhere during the concert.

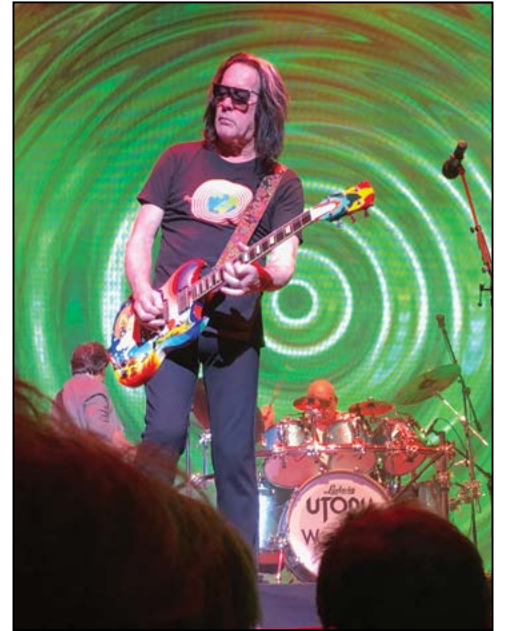
“Who ordered this?” they asked, confused over the request. Robert explained no one but that he just thought it would be a cool nostalgic tribute to Utopia’s earlier, well-known performances.

The staff chased down the management who abruptly denied the request claiming it would be a liability issue and demanded that he remove the box off the premises.

At this point, more than an hour had pass. Disappointed, Robert began to return the box to his car.

The whole conversation was overheard by a man who had purchased VIP tickets to meet the band backstage. He encouraged Robert to wait while he asks the guys backstage during his VIP meet-and-greet if they would be interested in it.

Backstage, the man relayed the



incident who wanted to see it.

Meanwhile, outside, a bouncer noticed that Robert was still lingering at the entrance with his big box and once again demanded that he leave the premises.

“He’s with me,” Michelle announced from inside. “Let me see what you have,” she said as she approached Robert. Robert opened the box to reveal the ice sculpture.

“Come with me,” she instructed. Robert and Jason followed Michelle backstage with the box.

It was about 30 minutes before showtime and Rundgren and the band were still doing their sound checks.

Backstage, Michelle introduced Robert and Jason to Rundgren and presented him with the ice guitar.

Rundgren was thoroughly amazed. Robert gave Rundgren the guitar who invited Robert and Jason to hang out with the rest of the band in the dressing room. They enjoyed a beer together then headed for their third-row seats.

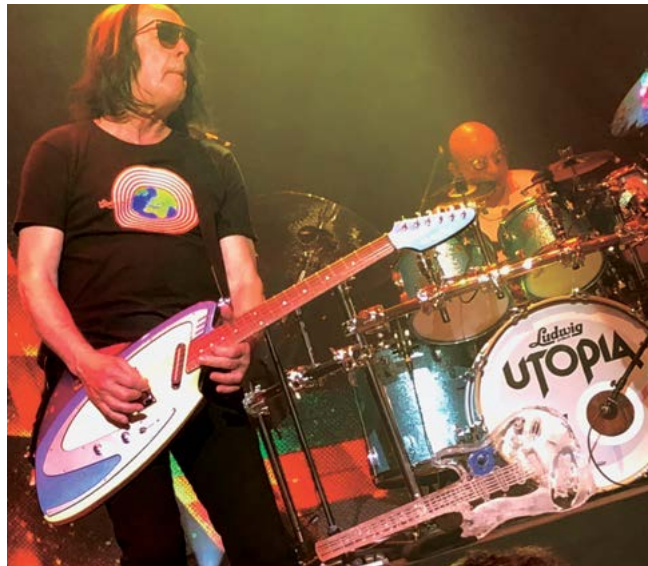
Rundgren’s act no longer includes “Singring and the Glass Guitar” and the smashing of an ice guitar. However, near the end of the show, Rundgren brought the ice guitar onto the stage placing

it next to the drums.

At the end of the encore, Rundgren picked up the ice guitar, still containing Terry’s ashes, and held it up over his head for all to see. He then threw it high in the air and walked off as the guitar shattered across the stage - a perfect ending to a perfect tribute.



Todd Rundgren, Robert and Jason Chislett



Terry rests inside the Ice Guitar on stage in front of the drummer.

R	F	O	R	W	A	R	D	C	Y	T	H
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C	E	N	U	A	O	O	F	S	M	A	U
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X	O	H	N	T	N	T	D	M	T	Z	R
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VACATIONS		TOLERANT	
CLEAN OUT		ACCEPT	
DOWNSIZE		ONWARD	
SIMPLE		CLOSE	

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David George THE NAKED GARDENER

Winter Bloomers Bring Color

Many of us grew up with images or memories of brown or snow-covered winter gardens – seemingly lifeless and frozen during the cold months. Flying east for business, I would gaze out my plane window at wind-swept plains and farms of brown earth. I knew when my plane had returned to California. All below me was green again.

During our cooler and wetter months, a magical change occurs outside. The hot, dry wildfire season ends (weeks too late unfortunately for thousands of our fellow residents this year). Fall rains return and brown hillsides burst with green again, signaling that our native plants have awakened from their dormancy. Winter-blooming natives bring color and joy to my garden.



One of my favorite garden natives are the bushy Oregon Grape (mahonia aquifolium) that produce bright yellow flower clusters December through February. They grow low, bushy, and thrive in dry, shady locations that are otherwise difficult to keep alive. Mahonias attract robins and cedar waxwings who dine on their blue-black “grapes” in spring. Like other natives, Oregon Grapes require little or no watering once they are established. Also, their prickly leaves repel deer.

You can find other winter-blooming California natives at local nurseries, or at Annie’s Annuals in Richmond, or by

going online www.anniesannuals.com. Another of my favorite native plant sites is the California Flora Nursery in Fulton, at www.califloranursery.com.

The plants in my garden are about 80% California native. But I love my roses, citrus and peonies, too. Non-native plants from temperate or Mediterranean climates do well in coastal California. Non-natives bloom in summer and fall when natives look droopy or dead. But watch out for overly thirsty varieties. My December and January favorite bloomers are tall Chinese Holly (mahonia lomariifolia), daffodil (narcissus), ornamental citrus, early-blooming viburnums, daphnes, and camellias. Many fill the air with fragrance on damp evenings.

Cold temperatures are required for many fruit trees to produce fruit, especially apples and pears. Even citrus (that do not tolerate freezing) require night time temps in the low 40’s to ripen and for their fruit skins to turn orange or yellow. Fortunately, cold conditions eliminate annoying insect populations. Winter can be a marvelous time to be a naked gardener.

Diablo Gazette has provided an email address for readers dying to know my secrets. Just email your questions or comments to: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com. I will share the best each month and include answers to your natural questions. Let the Naked Gardener know what you think.



farmerfresh

by Debra Morris, Pacific Coast Farmers Market
<http://www.pcfma.org/concord>

LET’S HEAR IT FOR LEMONS

Imagine what your culinary life would be like without the humble lemon. No chilled, fresh lemonade in the summer or no gooey tart lemon bars. there would be no lemon butter on your seafood! They’re beautiful in color, have a fresh, tart flavor, are very versatile, and are full of vitamins. What could be more flavorful and useful than the lemon?



When we talk about lemons, we’re usually referring to the Eureka or the Lisbon lemon. Both of these are grown for their acidic juice and rarely eaten raw. Originating in California, the Eureka is one of the most popular and abundant varieties seen at the market. These lemons are known as the “four seasons” lemon because the Eureka tree blooms and yields fruit year round.

The Lisbon and Eureka can be interchangeable in usage. Eureka lemons may have a few seeds and a somewhat pitted skin, while the Lisbons are commonly seedless with smoother skin. Both types have medium-thick skins and are abundantly juicy.

Meyer lemons, on the other hand, were first introduced to the United States from China in the early 20th century by Frank Meyer, from whom they also got their name. This sweet winter citrus is thought to be a cross between a regular lemon and a mandarin orange. They’re sweeter in taste, smaller in size, and have more of an orange-yellow rind. Meyers are more seasonal, usually seen between December and May.

Use in sauces, marinades (lemons are a natural tenderizer), salad dressings, in cocktails, and of course, lemon-

ade. The zest and juice are good in baked goods and as finishing touches to fish and vegetables. They’re loaded with vitamin C.

Visit your local farmers’ market and pick up some wonderful lemons and other citrus from Diaz Farms out of Fowler. Or head over to Hamlow Ranch who come from Turlock for some nice juicy Lisbon lemons.

Celebrate the New Year with some Meyer Lemon Drop Cocktails

- 1 cup vodka
- 2/3 cup Meyer lemon juice (2-3 lemons)
- 1/3 cup superfine sugar

If you don’t have superfine sugar left over from your holiday baking, don’t worry. You can make it easily. Make sure that the sugar dissolves completely. Put a cup of sugar in your food processor, and process for 1-2 minutes and voila, superfine sugar. Measure portion after the processing. Put the three ingredients in a sealed container (like a mason jar) and shake until the sugar dissolves. Then add ice and shake again until your drink is chilled. Serve immediately with a lemon wedge and if you like, a lemon sugared rim. Makes four cocktails.



CONCORD LIVE STRONG HEALTH EXPO

Resources and Information for Seniors, Families and Professionals and Free Screenings

Friday, March 1, 2019

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Concord Senior Center
2727 Parkside Circle

Exhibits, Health Screenings & Presentations

FREE ADMISSION! If you wish to be a vendor, register online at www.concord.org # 109009 or call 925-671-3320



Mrs Butterbanks

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RESOLUTION: MORE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Ahhhh, the beginning of a New Year. We always have such good intentions with the whole resolution idea, but truth be told, most of us lose the ambition towards the third week of January. I’m totally guilty of this, and have no issue admitting it. We all have this two month “Feed Fest” starting after Halloween and suddenly try to cut ourselves off from all the glutinous activity. So, this recipe teeters on both sides, it’s dark and rich, but fluffy and light at the same time. I see it as the perfect balance of both worlds. Enjoy my friends!



CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

- 8 (1oz) squares semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 TBSP butter
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 TBSP sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 1/4 cups whipping cream, whipped till a peak forms

Place your chopped chocolate, water and butter in a bowl on top of a saucepan with simmering water (aka double boiler) and stir until melted. Remove from heat and let cool 10 minutes.

In a small saucepan, combine egg yolks, sugar, and water on low heat and whisk until the temperature reaches 160

degrees, about 2-2 1/2 minutes. Slowly whisk the chocolate mixture into the egg mixture and let cool another 10 minutes. This is a good time to whip the cream. After 10 minutes, fold the whipped cream into the chocolate mixture until nicely incorporated. At this time, you can spoon into dessert dishes, or use a ziplock bag with the corner cut-off and pipe into shot glasses or champagne flutes depending on your preferred serving size. I prefer shot glasses. It is a perfect serving size along with a tiny spoon (pictured) found on the grocery aisle with the paper plates and cups. This recipe is also GF, gluten free.



computercorner

by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

I Just Fell for a Computer Support Scam

Ok so you just fell for a PC support scam now what? They said my computer is now fixed. Should I depend on them to have done the job right?

Let's review, they told you they were

from Microsoft, Apple, or the IRS and you have an infection that is causing problems on their network so they will have to shut you down to prevent further damage. To fix this issue call the 800# provided to get technical support to fix it.

Then, they directed you to a site to install a public program to communicate with them. They asked you to setup TeamViewer, Ammy, or one of many communications programs that allow remote access to your computer.

To convince you of their sincerity (false or course) the scammer provides a bogus report which proves that you are a reckless computer user and should be punished for your evil deed. But, for a fee, they can fix it. Wow that's so generous of them, isn't it?

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

First, turn off your computer and don't restart it. Next, call your bank because according to Lifewire a legit technology information and advice website, "Chances are, if you bank with a larger well-known bank, they will already have experience with this type of scam and will tell you exactly what they



can do in terms of putting a security alert on your account, dealing with fraudulent charges, etc.."

Third, call your local professional and tell them your tale. They will likely ask you to bring the computer into them so they can remove

the "tech fixes" the scammer put on your computer. If you ignore these steps it won't be long before another ransom related attack hits you because part of the "fix" is to infect you with a malicious program. The scammer tech support person will only be too eager to "help" you again, of course the fee goes up. Now all your bank, stock trading and personal records are compromised.

Worse yet, you may be a target of a multiprong scam as Ron Jacobs of Clayton, CA just reported. He got the email, browser and phone call attack nearly simultaneously. Thinking he actually had a problem he had it checked out. We were able to reassure him it was all just a scam designed to intimidate him to action.

Please note, if you have services with a MSP provider, such as CUSA Care Cyber Security, you're clean and protected. What's an MSP? Managed Service Providers offer a host of managed computer services. That means they manage your computer for errors, virus, hacks and scams for you. In today's environment you need all the help you can get. Prices under \$10.00/mo.



Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

WALTER

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

Three-year-old Walter a is a snuggly, black-and-tan German Shepherd mix. He was neglected and was pulled from the shelter with a stomach full of rocks and suffering from skin and ear infections. He will need a patient owner willing to correct his behavior (he does not tolerate being challenged by other dogs). However, this dopey guy gets along fine with mellow male and small dogs. He will need a proper introduction to new people. Due to his behavioral issues, an experienced dog owner would be an ideal match. Walter needs a home with no young children or cats; however, older children would be fine. Walter is crate-trained and potty-trained. He is smart, a great protector with a loud bark, and knows "Sit," "Down," and "Shake" commands. He is slowly recovering from his skin condition. Walter is neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. His adoption fee is \$300, but his adopter will receive six months of free food. To meet this "pawsitively special dawg" and find out if you are a good match for each other, email Alex at fraresq@gmail.com.

Martinez-based, First Responders Animal ResQ, believes that every dog has a special person and every person has a special dog. Their goal is to serve as matchmakers. First Responders is



a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. They accept monetary donations, pet supplies, medicine and dog food and are always looking for fosters who are provided with supplies, resources and support in caring for their rescues.

[Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity Doberman with more than 71,000 followers. Instagram.com/rubydooby_Do. Column written by Jill Hedgecock, author of *Rhino in the Room*, Program Coordinator, Mount Diablo branch of the California Writers Club, www.jillhedgecock.com.]

City Seeks Applicants for Open Seats on Concord Boards and Commissions

The Concord City Council has announced the opening of recruitments for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Board of Appeals, Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Advisory Committee, Concord Pavilion Outreach Committee, Contra Costa Transportation Authority – Citizens' Advisory Committee, Design Review Board, Personnel Board, and Planning Commission.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is seeking two individuals willing to serve a four-year term ending February 28, 2023. Members of this committee must be Concord residents and be enthusiastic about Complete Streets, cycling and other alternative modes of transportation.

The Board of Appeals is seeking two members and one alternate willing to serve a four-year term ending February 28, 2023. Appointees shall be qualified in and specifically knowledgeable in the City of Concord Construction Code and applicable local ordinances.

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Advisory Committee is seeking one member willing to serve a two-year term ending December 31, 2020. The committee members act as advisors to the CCCTA Board of Directors and collect and report service issues and

concerns received from their respective jurisdictions.

The Concord Pavilion Community Outreach Committee is seeking four members willing to serve a two-year term ending February 28, 2021. This committee provides guidance to the Pavilion General Manager on outreach efforts to attract applications from local schools, cultural organizations and the community to bring additional community events to the Pavilion which will expand the use of the venue beyond the concert season.

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority – Citizens' Advisory Committee is seeking one member willing to serve the remainder of a two-year term ending February 28, 2020. The CCTA-CAC serves the Authority by reviewing and commenting on transportation policies and issues broadly affecting Contra Costa County.

The deadline for applications to be received by the City Clerk's Office is Friday, Jan. 11, 2019 at 5 p.m.

Complete descriptions of each board and commission and application forms are available at the City's website at www.cityofconcord.org/BCApplications. Questions can be directed to City Clerk Joelle Fockler at (925) 671-3390.

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theRIGHT move
by Terrylynn Fisher, Broker Associate
www.BuyStageSell.com

“The Sky is Falling! NOT!”

Have you read the press? Interest rates went up, November home sales are down, and “the sky is falling!” Well, not quite, for the week of December 25, 2018, the mortgage interest rates were still under 5%, in fact closer to 4.5%. Buyers are finding there are homes to purchase as things stay on the market longer and in most locations the sale prices are still within 98 – 100% of asking. There are many reasons that this market is different from the bottoming out of the market over a decade ago. Many realtors don’t believe that 2019 will be anything but a more balanced market for buyers, and sellers who want to sell.

So what do we know? We know that homes are moving, albeit slower, meaning averages of 21 to 30 days vs. 3 to 10 days in local markets. From a buyer’s perspective, they actually have time to get in to see properties before they go pending, without having to take time off work. Prices are also settling a bit as buyers negotiate price or terms or make contingent offers (with time to sell their homes). Fantasy pricing reveals to buyers who the real sellers are. In contrast to the last few years, putting a price on a home, wishing and hoping, is not how value is deter-

mined. MARKET VALUE is what a ready buyer is willing to pay.

So where are we? All I know for sure is that people want to own homes. Renting pays the mortgage for the landlord, and while you must pay to live somewhere, the question is, why not pay down your own mortgage?

In the 2017 Profile of Home Staging, it quantified that staged homes sell more quickly and for more money. For sellers who want TOP DOLLAR in this market, staging is as important as ever. Research shows that millennials put all their savings into a down payment, thus have no money left for fixing or upgrades. Baby Boomers are retiring with no desire to upgrade a property (again). The investors, well, they would love to have a bargain. Which buyer do you want?

Terrylynn Fisher Broker Associate, Dudum Real Estate (DRE#01882902), Awarded 2018 - 5 Star Professional, Senior Real Estate Specialist, Reach Terrylynn at 925 876 0966 or Terrylynn@BuyStageSell.com (DRE#00615420).

EVEN in a Slow Market

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Terrylynn Fisher

REALTOR® | CRS, SRES, CSP Elite Agent

925.876.0966 | DRE# 00615420

Info@BuyStageSell.com | BuyStageSell.com



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.



Tribute to Lawr Michaels

Lawr Michaels was a talented musician, a dog lover, and baseball enthusiast, especially Fantasy Baseball and appears as a key character in the book, Fantasyland He wrote for USA Today and was a co-host on “The Tout Wars Hour” on the radio (FNTSY, the Fantasy Sports Network). He passed on December 19, 2018 due to Krohn’s disease.

“Life is such a silly ephemeral thing. So difficult to understand, let alone make reasonable. And yet it is wondrous and beautiful, for though in the end it takes us from one another, certainly prior to that life gives us the gift of one another.” -Lawr Michaels



Diane Walsh (r) painted a tribute to her husband, Lawr Michaels, with friend Deedee Hubner (l) for an entry in the Guinness Rhino Record art promotion for Jill Hedgecock’s (center) new book “Rhino in the Room.”



frugelegance

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

From Closet to Baby’s Nursery

Small space living has its challenges. There are times when life requires a little more space, such as for work or for a growing family. Transforming a large closet into a small office or bedroom might seem difficult, but really, it only needs a few main items to turn it into a productive and useful space. Creating a comfortable and yet organized space is key. Here’s how we turned this closet into a fabulous baby’s nursery, FrugElegance style, of course (frugal yet elegant).

The furniture and the door make this project a winner. We installed a sliding barn door style door rather than installing a regular door. The sliding door doesn’t take up valuable space by opening into either the nursery or the main living area. It only needs a wall to slide across.

As for furniture, a crib and changing table are needed of course. With space at a premium, creating a changing table on top of a cabinet not only saves space but also provides more storage to the room.

We found beautiful and affordable cabinets at Ikea and chose one with a top sliding shelf-drawer that we used for storing baby’s shoes.

For decorating our new nursery, we began with this very simple DIY (do it yourself) furniture upgrade.

We added decorative peel-and-stick wallpaper to the inside sides of the larger cabinet. (See photo).

The room decor should also be functional. Remember our easy DIY painted basket shelves we shared with you back in March? They work so well for books, toys and changing table supplies. For the final touches, we hung a few adorable pieces of art, such as a pretty metal art “goodnight” and a couple of DIY framed quotes.

It all came together so beautifully. We love the new baby’s nursery. So many spaces can be created from other useful areas. Space under the staircase space can be converted for storage or bookshelves. Use room dividers to make one room into two. You can also turn a closet into a small home office area. What have you changed in your home to turn an area to a more useful one? We would love to hear your designs.

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





Happy New Year, Concord!

by Elaine Schroth

2019 is promising to be a great year for the city of Concord. Visit Concord is the official destination marketing organization representing the tourism and hospitality industry for the city of Concord. It launched its new and improved website, VisitConcordCA.com. The site showcases the brand in a fresh way and provides enhanced interactive tools to help visitors navigate the site. The responsive site is designed to lead visitors along pathways from big ideas down to specific information with simple navigation and search options. Here you can learn of Concord's upcoming events, things to do, places to eat, weather updates, hotel information, maps, etc., virtually anything you need to know to enjoy this community.

Visit Concord also produced a new short video. The short video highlights the people, businesses and amenities that make Concord such a great place to live. You can view it for yourself at VisitConcordCA.com.

Visit Concord's mission is to promote Concord by increasing the awareness and enhancing the image of our city's distinct assets and amenities. The Visit Concord team is charged with the promotion and marketing of the city of Concord as a leisure travel, sports, events and meeting destination.



Comfort Food Week January 18-27

Looking ahead in January and wishing there were more fun events to put on your calendar? Look no further than the 2nd Annual Comfort Food Week, Friday, January 18, through Sunday, January 27.

Restaurants all over Concord including downtown, midtown, the diamond district and the monument will be spotlighting the city's emerging foodie scene through special dishes or menu items in their establishments. Show your support for these businesses and educate yourself about our diverse cuisine. View all the details at VisitConcordCA.com/ComfortFoodWeek.

Mayor's State of the City Address and Awards Luncheon

If you love Concord and are interested in hearing the future plans for the city, the Mayor's State of the City Address is an event not to miss.

The Concord Chamber of Commerce and the City of Concord are hosting the 34th Annual Mayor's State of the City Address and Awards Luncheon. The

event will take place at the Hilton Concord, 1970 Diamond Boulevard, on Friday, February 1, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. This year, Mayor Carlyn Obringer's speech will feature her vision for 2019. Mayor Obringer has been on City Council since 2016, and previously sat on the City of Concord's Planning Commission. For tickets or sponsorship opportunities, please call the Concord Chamber at 925-685-1181.

Celebrating 50 Years of Jazz

The city of Concord will explore the flavor of jazz by celebrating the

50th anniversary of the first Concord Jazz Festival and hometown jazz icon Dave Brubeck. Watch for special events throughout the year. If you would like to be included in the celebration, contact us at info@visitconcordca.com.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Elaine Schroth is the Executive Director of Visit Concord and is a monthly guest columnist in the Diablo Gazette. She can be reached at ESchroth@visitconcordca.com.

2019 Resolution: Get Organized

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“Heroes Around Me” Student Art Show

Main Street Arts is hosting the Martinez PTA Reflections Art Show “Heroes Around Me” from January 11 to January 31.

Reflections is a National PTA arts program that provides an opportunity for students to use their creative talents. Reflections takes original student submissions inspired by the annual theme “Heroes Around Me” in disciplines of visual art, photography, literature, music composition, film and dance choreography. There is also an optional “special artist” category for students who have an ADA qualified disability.

Local PTA’s organize a contest at their schools and select which works to advance to the city level. Works are then further judged with opportunities for advancement to state and national levels. Colleen Gianatiempo, PTA Reflections Chair, is the organizer of the Martinez event. She is also an artist, graphic designer, interior designer, photographer and arts educator living and working in

Martinez.

“Schools that eliminate art programs are doing so at their peril,” Gianatiempo says. “While no one questions foundation subjects like reading and math for the development of competent citizens, not enough people are inquiring about the importance of art and creativity are for kids. The importance is paramount. Arts and creativity nurture well-being and

assist learners in creating connections between subjects.”

Kids who participate in art programs gain motor skills, knowledge of history and culture,

develop problem solving abilities, and achieve mental wellness through healthy emotional responses.

There will be a reception on Saturday, January 12, from 2pm to 4pm which will include a face painter for kids. Main Street Arts is located 613 Main Street in Martinez. For more information go to www.mainstreetarts.net.



Clayton Children Bake Sale Raises \$4000 for Paradise Victims

On November 19 the Clayton Childrens Center hosted a bake sale with proceeds benefiting camp fire victims. The bake sale was organized by Kara Fredrickson (Mrs Freddie) and Sandi McCracken, directors of Clayton Children’s Center. While some of the children baked treats at the school, parents and staff also brought in baked goods. Diablo View Construction, of Clayton offered to match the sales up to \$1000.

Clayton resident, Gloria Macari, also donated \$1000. Between those two large donations and sales the school raised \$4000. It was a valuable way to show



kids that they can help others in need and make a difference.

The school includes preschoolers from 2-4 years old and providers after school care for kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Clayton Valley Women’s Club Donates to Vestia

With 1,800 children in foster care in Contra Costa County, President Judy Disbrow, chose VESTIA (Volunteer & Emergency Services Team In Action) as the recipient of the President’s charity in 2018. VESTIA is a non-profit organization that includes support for low-income children and families in the county. Members donated \$538 in gift cards for children ages 10-16.

Clayton Valley Woman’s Club members are dedicated to meeting the needs of the community. They meet the second Tuesday of most months at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Clayton. Guests and new members are always welcome.

For more information call Linda at 415-652-3503 or Sheila at 925-672-7947



Left to Right: VESTIA Vice President Elizabeth Masten, CVWC President Judy Disbrow and VESTIA Financial Reporter

READER TESTIMONIAL

“I look forward to the Diablo Gazette at the beginning of every month, It’s a good community paper. I love the stories. You have good writers.” – Wayne C.



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Six Reasons TO LIST YOUR HOME THIS WINTER



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<p>REASON NUMBER <i>Four</i></p> <p>FEWER SHOWINGS</p> <p>IT'S ALL ABOUT QUALITY OVER QUANTITY. EXPECT FEWER SHOWINGS BUT SERIOUS OFFERS FROM QUALIFIED BUYERS. FEWER SHOWINGS ALSO MEANS LESS DISRUPTION TO YOUR HOME LIFE.</p>	<p>REASON NUMBER <i>Five</i></p> <p>THE COZY EFFECT</p> <p>BUYERS MAKE EMOTIONAL DECISIONS WHEN PURCHASING A HOME. OUR HOMES USUALLY LOOK THEIR BEST DURING THE HOLIDAYS WITH SEASONAL DECOR. COZY FIREPLACES AND THE SMELL OF PUMPKIN PIE BAKING IN THE OVEN.</p>	<p>REASON NUMBER <i>Six</i></p> <p>BETTER POSITION TO BUY YOUR NEXT HOME</p> <p>IF YOU CAN WAIT UNTIL SPRING TO BUY YOU WILL HAVE MORE HOMES TO CHOOSE FROM AND THE ADVANTAGE OF NEGOTIATING WITHOUT A CONTINGENCY FOR SELLING YOUR FIRST HOME.</p>

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JOURNEYMAN'S JOURNAL
by Scott Feuer

TALES FROM THE TRAIL

Weekend at Burney's

Have you ever seen the 1980's classic comedy "Weekend at Bernie's"? Well, I have the perfect place for skipping town and getting away for a little summer weekend fun and outdoor adventure with the family. I know, it's winter. The busy holiday season has just wound down and crisp cool days fill the air. But this is the perfect time to kick-off the New Year by planning some family fun during those doldrums days of summer when the kids are out of school and the Bay Area is too hot to bear.

Located 60 miles northeast of Redding in northern California, Burney Falls Memorial State Park is one of the most geologically unique and spectacular waterfalls in the state. Nicknamed the "eighth wonder of the world" by our 26th President Theodore Roosevelt, Burney Falls cascades 129 feet straight down from a spring feed creek above with Mother Nature's added feature of an underground river that emerges in a thunderous roar from a fern-laced black volcanic rock wall face. One hundred million gallons of ice-cold spring water



Hike around Burney Falls or further.

munching on our trail mix and smores' marshmallows. Apparently, it let itself in through an unnoticed tiny hole in the cabin's window screen. Let the fun begin! The family nominated me to remove the squirrel from our 200 sq. ft. "tiny house". Armed with a swim noodle in hand, I cautiously entered the cabin hoping to shoo the intruder out the front door. Surprised, the squirrel jumped out of the marshmallow bag and darted around the trail mix strewn floor and almost up my leg. The wife and kids' were

of no help, as they could only laugh. After a few minutes of chasing and prodding around, we finally resorted to leaving the door open while we sat around the campfire until the squirrel had his fill and walked out on his own. Another must is taking a short drive to the small town of Burney for ice, firewood, and at least one night out for dinner. Unfortunately, we were there during the devastating Redding fires last year and the town was deserted due to weeks of thick smoke and a local power outage caused by one of the forest fires a few miles away. The local market had to discard all the meats and frozen foods due to the lack of power and the town

south all the way to Mexico (1,418 miles) or North to Canada (1,232 miles) if time permits. Seriously, people do actually hike this entire trail over a few months period and Burney Fall's General Store is a welcomed trailside stop for these ambitious thru-hikers. Alternatively from the Falls Overlook, hike down to Britton Lake (2.5 miles hike round trip) and visit the marina for kayak or paddle boat rentals and enjoy some time on the lake. From the campground you could also drive down the marina with your beach/picnic gear for the day at the sandy beach.



Peaceful Squirrel-Free Cabin Camping at Sunrise

flow over the mist-filled falls every day providing a spectacular venue to escape the summer heat.

In addition to the majestic beauty of the falls, a network of hiking trails, fishing holes, visitor center/museum, boat rentals, rustic cabins, camping, and delicious soft serve ice cream at the general store make Burney Falls a very popular summertime destination for the whole family. And now is the time to reserve your summertime weekend getaway as reservations fill-up fast. Plan six months in advance.

I recommend staying in one of the cute little rustic cabins; the kids will love the bunkbed style sleeping arrangements and you can leave the tent at home if so desired. However, if you store your food in the cabin, keep the windows and doors closed to keep the crafty little squirrels out while you're away. We were sternly told to do so upon checking in. We followed the suggestion but returned one afternoon to find one savvy critter

was overrun by firemen staying in local motels and parking lots. It was quite the eerie feeling, but thankfully the power came back online just before we entered town and the streets slowly came back to life. The friendly locals highly recommended Art's Outpost for dinner and we enjoyed an entertaining family supper with one of the best prime rib meals I have ever had.

For the main event of your stay, after a good night's rest at your squirrel-free cabin, wake up at sunrise and enjoy a cup of hot coffee around the campfire. Then hit the trail for the short 1/4 mile hike to the Falls Overlook viewing area to experience the powerful beauty of Burney Falls. Meander down the Falls Loop Trail to the bottom of the waterfall and snap a few family photos or try your luck with excellent catch-and-release trout fishing. From here continue across Rainbow Footbridge back to the Falls Overlook (one mile loop) or link up with the renowned Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Hike



Spectacular Burney Falls-A Geological Wonder

haven't), we did have lots of laughs and good times together while escaping the summer heat. Google Burney Falls now to reserve your weekend at Burney's and let the good times roll.

Prime Rib Feast-Town of Burney



Prime Rib Feast-Town of Burney

Burney Falls Memorial State Park is certainly a California jewel and a perfect destination to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and create some family fun memories. Although no one pretended to animate a dead guy in order to prolong our vacation or got a toupee stapled to their head (you must see the Weekend at Bernie's movie if you

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the concordian

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

Resolutions are a Bear

It is that time of year when resolutions are made, gym subscriptions double, and hopes are high that our willpower will be sufficient to allow us to accomplish those tasks that have defeated us in the past. Resolutions are like wrestling a bear, i.e., you can hardly get your arms around the bear before the claws of resistance tear you apart.

In the City Council Chambers, past Council resolutions haunt us in a way that make wrestling with a bear less scary. These are just a few of them:

Rent Stability - For three years we have heard the cry of renters who have been displaced, retaliated against, and forced to remove children from their schools and friends, or have otherwise been adversely affected by rapidly rising rents. In many cases, funds that could have flowed into the local community were instead pulled away to distant corporations.

Now the Council has resolved to form an ad hoc committee to bring to the Council some solid proposals that, had they been implemented three years ago, many of today's landlord/renter issues would have been reduced. We resolve to go forward and find a balance, or concordance, between the security of tenants and a reasonable return on investment for the services that landlords provide.



Where can this carved bear be found?

Homelessness/Underhoused - This is a plague upon our conscience, a wound on our souls. We are tormented by the broken lives we see in the streets. Even worse, we become angry and frustrated seeing those who will not even allow us to reach them. There are a great many more who are underhoused, specifically those of the younger generation who have moved back in with their parent's and who cannot afford to live independently in their own homes. We therefore resolve to find ways to ensure that more affordable housing gets built, knowing that the first wave of those 'saved' will be those that are currently sleeping on our couches (or in their childhood rooms if lucky).

Community Safety - Everyone in our community needs to feel safe and protected. Of course, safety also must be balanced against the need for liberty and justice.

Community safety should not fall solely on the shoulders of those with badges and guns, but on the whole community. Community safety is more than just dealing with crime; it refers to a sense of belonging to the community and harmony with others in the community. We must not be distracted by sudden aberrant acts. In addition, we should think about and appreciate those working for the community, whether by picking up glass in the parks, or by removing graffiti.

The Council therefore resolves to look again at those things we can do that can make our community safer, whether from poisoned air or from hate filled ignorance. We resolve once again, as we have for the last nine years, to bring a police and city service substation back to the Monument Corridor.

Potholes and Roads - With our road repair liability greater than our pension liability, we need to make a determined effort to obtain funds from both state and local sources (yes that means from our own pockets) to recover from the Great Recession's pull back on road maintenance. The Council has placed road repair and replacement among our top priorities, and we resolve to return road repair and replacement programming to its former normal patterns, rather than waiting until each needed road repair becomes an emergency.

Care for One Another - One of the haunting lessons of the past year's public comments is our failure to care for and respect one another. This has been on display in arguments over such things as the right to control and make decisions regarding one's own body, as in the case of cannabis use. We have also failed to respect different and/or opposing views regarding the role of government, or even simple acceptance of different life styles. This applies to all of you out there in the community. We must all resolve to correct these failures going forward into the New Year. So, let's resolve to remain indivisible, with liberty and justice for all this year (or at least until February).

[Note the picture of a resolute bear in Concord that inspired the title of this article. If you know where it is and are the first Concord Resident to identify it's location to me at EdiBirsan@gmail.com, I will take you and a friend to lunch at any restaurant in Concord Monday-Friday.]

CLAYCORD NEWS & TALK

In case you missed it...



Statewide Snowpack At 67 Percent of Average

Storms have come to California early this winter but a survey of the Sierra snowpack shows it's only at 67 percent of average statewide for this time of year, according to the state's Department of Water Resources.

The snowpack survey was the first of 2019 in California and included a manual survey at Phillips Station just off of U.S. Highway 50 near Sierra-at-Tahoe.

The manual survey showed a snow depth of 25.5 inches and a snow water equivalent of 9 inches, roughly 80 percent of average for the location and above the 67 percent statewide number taken from electronic readings around the Sierra Nevada, state water officials said.

The department conducts the surveys at Phillips Station five times annually — in early January, February, March, April and May. The snowpack is measured because it supplies about 30 percent of the state's water needs as it melts in the spring and summer.

Dental Service Program for Uninsured in Contra Costa County Starts This Month

A program to bring dental services to uninsured adults in Contra Costa County starts this month, according to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Lifelong Medical Services will partner with the charity to provide exams, cleanings, X-rays and additional services to those without dental insurance.

Three years ago, the St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County's adult dental program began in the central area of the county.

A patient request is screened and reviewed by a dental committee. If accepted, the patient receives services from La Clinica Dental Clinic in Pittsburg or Concord, Lifelong Dental in West County or a local dentist who has agreed to provide free services to program clients.

An estimated 300,000 people throughout Contra Costa County lack dental insurance.

More information on the program is

available at www.svdpc-cc.org or by calling (925) 439-5060.

Contra Costa County Library Clears All Outstanding Fines

As of Jan. 1, all library cards are returned to good standing and patrons who may have been staying away from the library can come back and enjoy all the services the library has to

offer. With accounts now cleared, the Library hopes to see patrons returning all the overdue items they were afraid to return due to fines. This move goes hand-in-hand with the elimination of fines announced last month.

"No matter how old, no matter why it was late, we want you to bring it back. No questions asked," said County Librarian Melinda Cervantes.

Moving forward, the Library will no longer charge daily overdue fines on library materials. Checkout periods will remain the same and charges for lost or damaged books will still apply.

"Yes, you still need to return library materials. That hasn't changed," said Deputy County Librarian Nancy Kreiser. "But when your schedule is hectic or you need another day or two to finish a great book, you can do so without worrying about late fines."

For more information on the elimination of fines please visit ccclib.org.



Dave & Buster's Restaurant and Video Arcade Coming to Concord

Dave & Buster's, the popular restaurant and video arcade, will be filling the spot vacated by Toys 'R' Us in the Veranda shopping center on Diamond Blvd. in Concord.

It's unknown when they plan to open, but they're starting their \$4,000,000 remodel of the building in the coming weeks.



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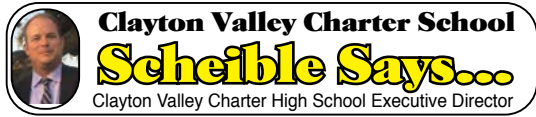
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Clayton Valley Students Launch "Discovery Kitchen"



Clayton Valley Charter High School students find ways to amaze me on a regular basis. But when you get food involved ... the WOW factor skyrockets.

Recently, a group of students from Marcellus Waller's Foods class teamed up with Brooke Tompkins, our Director of Dining Services, and created pumpkin magic. The class has a food theme each month. In November, Mr. Waller's class studied the pumpkin, its nutritional value and conducted cooking demonstrations in the classroom. Ms. Tompkins also incorporated pumpkin in the dining menus throughout the month, giving all CVCHS students a chance to experience this glorious gourd.

The best part, however, is when the class and kitchen collaborate to create our Discovery Kitchen. CVCHS partners with Chartwells K12 dining program, a company that prides itself on at least 90 percent of its food products being made on campus from scratch. CVCHS's goal isn't just serving great food, it's also teaching our students about diet, nutrition and self-sufficiency.

Through the Discovery Kitchen, students are producing something on a grand scale. Nine students from Mr. Waller's class produced the first of what we are hoping will be many Discovery

Kitchen events. They made pumpkin bars and served more than 250 students and staff, and they were delicious – verified by a personal taste test.

As Mr. Waller points out, making pumpkin bars for hundreds of students is no small feat.

"Students volunteered to take on the Discovery Kitchen launch on top of their regular classroom responsibilities," Mr. Waller said. "They learned how to prepare a recipe and create something in a commercial yield. They had to research, study and prep to make a large commercial batch and then serve and educate their fellow students during the presentation."

But it's not the only way students are creating food magic on campus. Ms. Tompkins also works with our Special Education teacher, Veronica Liwanag, to allow students to work in the kitchen and learn valuable skills.

"We have already seen our student workers make big improvements," Ms. Tompkins said. "They walk in and know exactly what needs to be done and it has been incredible teaching and working with them. We are watching them grow, learn and prepare for what could lead to more independent living and job options when they graduate."



JAXON'S MAGICAL ADVENTURE WITH BLACK INVENTORS AND SCIENTISTS

by Tamara Shiloh

Tamara Shiloh's series "Just Imagine...What if There Were No Black People in the World" is the perfect choice for young readers to honor Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. In "Jaxon's Magical Adventure with Black Inventors and Scientists" (2017, Just Imagine Books, 67 pages, \$8.99), children learn some of the significant contributions that Black people have made for society through a magical tale.

When Jaxon, a fourth-grader, obtains special powers through his grandmother's necklace and say the words, 'just imagine there were no Black people' right before going to bed, he awakens to find his laptop, pencil sharpener and tennis shoes are missing from where he left them the night before. Things get weirder for Jaxon when historical figures behind key components of these inventions magically appear to explain how their legacy has shaped the modern day. For example, readers are introduced to Dr. Mark Dean who invented a way for the keyboard, mouse and computer to communicate with each other. As Jaxon moves through each room in his house, more items have vanished. In the kitchen, a strange type of refrigerator has replaced the modern one. A hairbrush for thick, bushy locks disappears from the bathroom.

The book is an entertaining read but very educational, as well. Martin Luther King himself gives Jaxon some sage advice: "Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail." The words puzzle Jaxon at first, but then the meaning becomes clear to him. In addition to interesting content, the book has pictorial depictions of Jaxon in various parts of his home, photographs of the inventors and scientists, and even a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King. The illustrations by Jo Ann Kairys also include drawings of some of the inventions, including a lawn mower, the old-fashioned refrigerator, a theft-proof



mailbox and many more.

Author Tamara Shiloh's goal in writing the series is to educate children about Black history in a fun and informative way and to encourage students to participate in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs and ultimately pursue STEM careers. Tamara is co-owner of the Multicultural Children's Bookstore located in Hilltop Mall in Richmond, CA. She is currently working on the sequel, Jaxon and Kevin's Black History Trip Downtown.

Jaxon's Magical Adventure with Black Inventors and Scientists is an important book that reveals little-known facts of Black people's innovations that are not taught in school. The companion workbooks provide entertaining ways to further relay the subject matter. From a coloring book, to Jaxon's journal, to an activity book that includes quizzes, crossword puzzles, word searches and unscramble word challenges, these entertaining supplemental materials which can be purchased separately (or bundled for \$23) are perfect for teachers to craft lesson plans around the topic. The books are available for purchase at www.tamarashiloh.com.



AHA! to Start Middle School Hazing Safety Program

by Debbie Smith

The AHA! Movement is an anti-hazing awareness non-profit foundation created in the loving memory of my son Matthew Carrington who was killed in a water hazing while pledging a fraternity in Chico on February 2, 2005. I am the founder and CEO of the organization.

The statistics surrounding hazing are astounding. We know that hazing starts as early as elementary school. Forty-seven percent of children are hazed by the time they graduate high school. Even more staggering, for college level students who join any type of club, organization or sports team the numbers grow to sixty-seven percent. Just this fall we had three hazing deaths in four and half weeks.

We lose children to hazing every year. Why? Because most people, young and old, don't understand hazing or what it represents. Far too often it is confused with bullying and masked by traditions and as a result, they don't even realize what or when it is happening.

AHA! was created to educate children and adults on how to recognize hazing; what it looks like, the many shapes it shows itself, how to identify it in its infancy stages, know what to do when it happens to them or someone else, and promote healthy alternatives to hazing.

AHA!'s Be Aware Program, has been successful in high-schools and colleges, but we know we need to reach our children earlier. AHA! believes we need to change the mindset and culture before children get into college. By starting in middle school, we

can open their eyes to what they have learned to accept as normal behavior. Then we must reinforce our teachings in our high-school program, thus preparing them with the tools and voice to be safe from hazing dangers. Even more importantly, we will empower them to become an agent of change. Whereas we parents, educators, and institutions, may not change a culture that has been around for centuries, our youth can. They just need the tools to do so, and that is where AHA! comes in.

Recently, AHA! partnered with Macy's Department Store in Walnut Creek to help start our much-anticipated-middle-school hazing awareness program. Currently, we are looking for middle-school students ages 12 and 13, as well as parents of middle-school children to be a part of our focus groups to help us retool our successful high-school program to be middle-school-age appropriate so that our life-saving-message is received and inspires positive group behavior.

We are looking for volunteers. If you or your child would like to be considered for our focus group, please email lovesfmlb@aol.com and type "Middle School Program" in the subject of your email.

Join the AHA! Movement

The AHA! Movement (AHA!) is an anti-hazing awareness non-profit foundation founded by Debbie Smith, MM, and CEO in the loving memory of my son Matthew Carrington who was killed in a water hazing while pledging a fraternity in Chico on February 2, 2005. I am the founder and CEO of the organization.