

# The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Community  
 Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill  
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FEBRUARY 2024



## American Dream TV Comes to Concord

pg. 6

Luna Restaurant owner/chef Habib El Jacifi prepares dessert on the next episode of the "American Dream" TV Show

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Book Review, Movie and Streaming Review, Calendar of Events by City and much more...

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 400 FERRY ST. MARTINEZ



**Publisher's Notes**  
by David King

# Working to Change the World

Congratulations to Panteha Bazyar of Northgate High. Inspired by the "I Could Change the World" project that engage all sophomores at Northgate. This is a program where students can choose a pressing issue in their community (or the world), that they would want to fix.

Bazyar's family is originally from Iran, so she chose human rights abuse.

She set up an advocacy table at the Walnut Creek Library to raise awareness.

It was there that the idea came to

her — start an organization to promote equity and advocate for the rights and necessity for people to improve their quality of life.

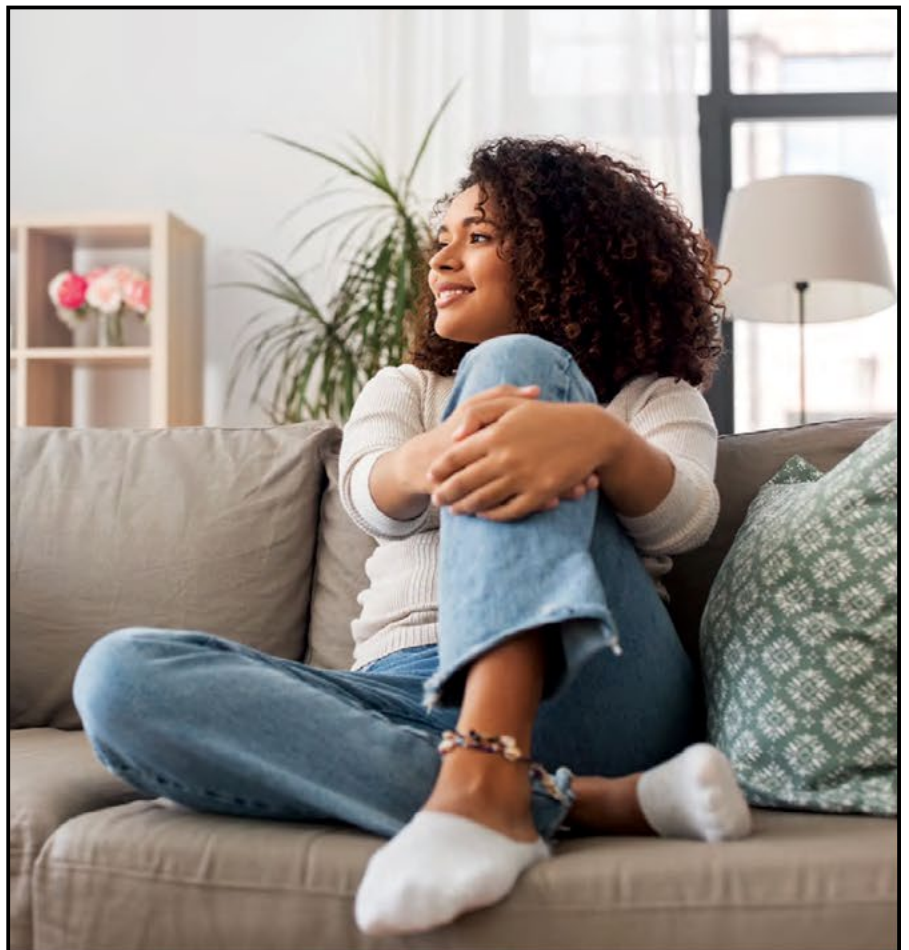
She founded Equitable Opportunities for All (EOFHA).

For her first project she organized a Holiday Book drive. Independently, she was able to collect over 300 books for all genres and age ranges. Half were children's books that she donated to area crisis nurseries.

Now she hopes to get her official non-profit status and build a team to tackle new missions. We wish her success.



Panteha Bazyar, Northgate student, donates books from her Holiday Book drive to area homeless shelters and nurseries. right: Donations collected.



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**Jim Diaz**  
Mayor, Clayton  
jdiaz@claytonca.gov

# Clayton Mayor

## A Letter from the Mayor

February 2024

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

What's Happening Around Town in 60 Seconds or Less.

I am committed to keeping you informed on important issues impacting our Community throughout the year.

For those of you not in attendance at our Tuesday, January 16, 2024, Council Meeting, I am proud to announce the Council approved a new three-year contract with our Police Chief, Richard McEachin. I am extremely happy with the negotiations and grateful for the excellent service our Police Chief and his staff provide to the Clayton Community.

Also at this meeting, we discussed a potential parking permit program near the planned 81-unit Olivia on Marsh Creek Project downtown. Thank you to those citizens who made their voices heard. We hear you loud and clear.

Rather than presenting options and encouraging discussion on how to solve the problem, the Staff Report seemed designed to push towards the desired result of taking no action and "kicking the can down the road." I, too, was disappointed with the Staff Report and the direction they wanted to take. A "kick-the-can-down-the-road" approach is unacceptable and our community deserves better.

The Council gave direction to Staff to return with an agenda item to establish an ad-hoc committee to discuss potential solutions or actions that we could take regarding the impact excessive parking may create in Stranahan, downtown, and

surrounding areas. I think we can all agree that 81 units with just 1.1 parking spaces per unit is a problem waiting to happen. Additionally, to clear up any misunderstanding, the Olivia on Marsh Creek is not a 55 and over Senior Housing Project and there is no age restriction.

As I mentioned in my last writing, I am extremely excited to participate in the planning for Clayton's 60th Anniversary of its 1964 Inauguration. I encourage everyone to get involved. Please contact City Hall if you would like to volunteer your time or expertise.

As your mayor, I will work hard to maintain Clayton's character while running an open and transparent local government. I want to keep you informed and involved in important decisions every step of the way.

Lastly, Happy 100th Birthday to Clayton resident Chuck Kohler. As one of the few remaining World War II and Pearl Harbor survivors, we thank him for his service and honor his sacrifices for our country.



You can reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns at 925-673-7316 or JimD@claytonca.gov. Let's make 2024 a year to remember in Clayton. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Jim*



**Edi Birsan**  
Concord Mayor  
cityofconcord.org

# Concord Mayor

## 20 Ways to Love Thy City

In the month of Valentine's Day, we should look beyond the simple visage of our nearest human or canine being and take the good will and enchantment to each one's community. Here are 20 ways to express that without smearing chocolates and flowers on the sidewalk.



1. Donate blood and platelets there is a shortage right now
2. Pick up a single piece of trash from the street everyday
3. Randomly buy the person behind you a cup of coffee/tea
4. Greet people on the street with Good Morning/Afternoon or Evening (Get it right so as not confuse them)
5. Look at something that your city has improved on and send a note to the city staff
6. Actually come to a FULL stop at a Stop Sign
7. Smile at pedestrians as they cross in front of you
8. Think about a civic volunteer opportunity that you can and would do and then do it
9. Greet a homeless person and look at them with compassion
10. SLOW down, see if you can drive

the speed limit as posted or 25 mph in residential areas

11. Take a walk around the block and if you see a neighbor that you do not know, introduce yourself

12. Give cookies to your immediate neighbor

13. Look around your house for books you are not going to reread and donate them to either the library or those little libraries that residents put outside their homes

14. Visit a park you do not normally go to and strike up a conversation with a stranger

15. Leave an extra-large tip at a restaurant or even a shop that has a tip jar

16. Visit a place in the city that you have not been to in a long time that made you smile and share the story with a stranger there.

17. Make a list of three things you can do to make things better and then do one each week

18. Look around at the names of the streets or neighborhoods and find out why or how that happened.

19. Read a pamphlet on the history of your city

20. Look at a plaque on a statue or a building and stop and read it.



**SUPERVISOR KEN CARLSON**  
District IV  
Contra Costa County

# Measure X

In November of 2020, Contra Costa County residents passed a countywide 20-year, 1/2 cent sales tax, Measure X. This tax is dedicated to "keep Contra Costa's regional hospital open and staffed; fund community health centers, emergency response; support crucial safety-net services; invest in early childhood services; protect vulnerable populations; and for other essential county services."

The County began collecting the tax on April 1, 2021. As of September of 2023, \$298.5 million in revenue has been collected in total.

Measure X has allowed the Board of Supervisors (the Board) to develop, expand, and maintain a greater equity of services and outcomes for all residents while addressing some of the gaps and disparities in our County's healthcare, social services, housing, and public safety.

Measure X funds have been used to fund several crucial programs and projects including the A3 (Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime) Crisis Response, adding 3,000 square feet to Psychiatric Emergency Services at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, funding the County's newest department - the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, developing a family navigator program, creating a Housing Trust Fund, and expanding fire services in east Contra Costa County.

These funds are typically allocated

through the County's budgeting process. However, this fall, there were funds unallocated: over \$33 million in one-time funds and \$4.7 million in ongoing revenue.

The Board received status reports on previous allocations, new department proposals, and recommendations from the Measure X Community Advisory Board.

On December 12, the Board approved a total of \$4,493,000 in one-time funds to be allocated. \$50,000 for the Clerk-Recorder/Elections' Mapping Prejudice Project, which will identify, map, and redact illegal, restrictive local covenants related to race.

Other funded projects are the development of a third youth center, expanding services in east Contra Costa County, and developing the African American Holistic Wellness Hub.

I proposed and my colleagues supported \$750,000 over three years to Contra Costa Animal Services to develop a spay and neuter clinic/pet retention program. After hearing from many advocates, this funding will improve the welfare of animals across the County.

The Board also approved the allocation of \$4,700,000 in ongoing funds. \$400,000 for the Clerk-Recorder/Elections' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Democracy Initiative which will add two bilingual DEI specialist positions to increase voter education, engagement,

	One-Time	FY 2022/23	Total Allocation	On-Going FY 2023-2024	Exhibit
<b>Goal #1: Mental Well Being:</b>					
CCRM Psychiatric Emergency Services - 3,000 square feet Expansion	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	1
A3 Contra Costa Community Crisis Initiative	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	2
EPSDT Leverage Fund for Children's Mental Health Services	\$ 3,250,000	\$ -	\$ 3,250,000	\$ -	3
San Ramon Valley FPD Behavioral Health Crisis Response Pilot Program	\$ 740,200	\$ -	\$ 740,200	\$ -	4
<b>Goal #2: Equity in Action:</b>					
Innovation Fund (Pilots and Innovative Projects)	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	5
Racial Equity and Social Justice	\$ -	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 1,200,000	6
Arts and Culture Programs	\$ -	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	7
Language Access Equity for Measure X Meetings	\$ 50,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 25,000	8
Measure X Needs Assessment Report Writer	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$ -	9
Family Navigators	\$ -	\$ 584,000	\$ 584,000	\$ 584,000	10
Library Literacy Program	\$ -	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	11
Startup cost for the Library Foundation	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ -	12
<b>Goal #3: Healthy Communities:</b>					
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center	\$ -	\$ 40,000,000	\$ 40,000,000	\$ 40,000,000	13
CCRM Medical Clinic and Office - Complex - 40,000 square feet	\$ 30,000,000	\$ -	\$ 30,000,000	\$ -	1
New Public Health Lab - 15,000 square feet	\$ 25,000,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000,000	\$ -	1
CCRM Parking Structure - 325 spaces	\$ 15,000,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000,000	\$ -	1
CCRM Interventional Radiology - 5,000 square feet	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000,000	\$ -	1
Local Housing Trust Fund	\$ -	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 12,000,000	14
Permanent Supportive Housing (Net of Match)	\$ 5,200,000	\$ -	\$ 5,200,000	\$ -	15
CC CARES - Expanded/Comprehensive Healthcare for Uninsured	\$ -	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	16
Development of Additional Childcare Providers	\$ -	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	17
Library Building Improvements	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	18
<b>Goal #4: Intergenerational Thriving:</b>					
County Youth Centers - East and Central County	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 11,750,000	\$ 3,500,000	19
Accessible Transportation Strategic Plan Implementation	\$ -	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,400,000	20
Master Plan for Aging/Local Community Based Aging Services	\$ 250,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 2,000,000	21
Early Childhood Education/Childcare	\$ -	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	22
Children with Disabilities/Childcare Provider Support	\$ -	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	23
<b>Goal #5: Welcoming &amp; Safe Community:</b>					
East County Fire - Build/Reopen and Staff Fire Stations (via annexation)	\$ 17,200,000	\$ -	\$ 17,200,000	\$ 3,500,000	24
Contra Costa County Fire - Reopen and Staff Fire Stations	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 5,100,000	\$ 3,500,000	24
Fire/Wildland Mitigation/Fuel Reduction	\$ -	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,500,000	\$ 4,500,000	24
Pineole Fire - Increase Service (via contract or annexation)	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	24
Body Worn and In-Car Cameras - Sworn Staff	\$ 720,000	\$ 1,841,000	\$ 2,561,000	\$ 1,841,000	25
Climate Sustainability-Sustainability Trust Public Works Projects	\$ -	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,500,000	26
Climate Equity and Resilience Investment in Conservation/Development	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	27
Community Based Restorative Justice	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	28
Illegal Dumping Initiative	\$ -	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	29
Sales Tax Consulting Administrative Expense	\$ 65,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 265,000	\$ 200,000	30
County Facilities Deferred Maintenance	\$ 3,750,000	\$ -	\$ 3,750,000	\$ -	31
Refugee Resettlement Resources	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -	32
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 136,895,200</b>	<b>\$ 78,150,000</b>	<b>\$ 215,045,200</b>	<b>\$ 107,000,000</b>	

and turnout. \$1,100,000 for a San Ramon Valley Fire Training Facility. The rest of the ongoing funds were allocated based on issues which include mental health services, food insecurity, and building new parks in the unincorporated County to ensure all residents have equitable access to open space.

These new allocations focus on improving the County services, and enhancing the quality of life equitably. I encourage you to follow the Measure X projects and programs as they develop and expand. To learn more about Measure X, please visit [contra costa.ca.gov/8530/Measure-X](http://contra costa.ca.gov/8530/Measure-X).

# calendar of events

## CLAYTON

### CLUBS

**Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.**

<https://www.lionsclubs.org>  
**Rotary Club of Concord.**

<http://www.concordcarotary.org>

**Cars 2nd Chance, vehicle / car donation programs** turns donations into cash for charities Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Charitable Fund. <https://cars2ndchance.com>

### LIBRARY

**January 9, Insiders 1 - 2 PM Adult Program.**

Fun activities for adults with disabilities the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

**January 17, Coventry & Kaluza: Circus, Comedy and Whatnot!**, from 2-2:45 p.m. Children's Program. Circus comedians Coventry & Kaluza bring a variety of skills and thrills to the stage and will amaze kids.

*Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd. For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>*

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY  
*Bringing People and Ideas Together*

## CONCORD

### CLUBS

**Concord NorCal Helping Hands Lion's Club.** [www.lionsclub.org](http://www.lionsclub.org)

**Rotary Club of Concord.**  
<http://www.concordcarotary.org>

### EVENTS

**February 3, The Knights of Columbus Super Bowl Crab Feed.** \$75 per person with a discounted price of \$70 for groups of 10 or more. St Bonaventure Parish 5562 Clayton Rd, Concord More info and tickets: [Greyeototo@gmail.com](mailto:Greyeototo@gmail.com) (925) 698-5254

**February 3, Concord High School Athletic Boosters Crab Feed.** 6 - 11 PM. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd., Concord. [www.concordhighschool.net/crab-feed](http://www.concordhighschool.net/crab-feed)

**February 4, East Bay Comic Con,** 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Admission \$12, Concord Plaza Inn, 45 John Glenn Dr, Concord

**February 4, Super Valentine's Boutique,** 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Free Admission. Hilton Concord, 1970 Diamond Blvd, Concord. [www.kidfestconcord.com](http://www.kidfestconcord.com)

**February 9, St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church Annual Crab Feed & Silent Auction,** 6 PM. Center Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd., Concord. <https://www.stdemetrios.info/>

**February 10, Diablo View Orchid Society Orchid Show and Sale,** 8 AM - 4 PM PST. Admission \$6. <https://dvos.org>, California State University East Bay Concord Campus, 4700 Ygnacio Valley Rd, Concord

**February 10, I Heart Harajuku,** 10 am-5 pm, The Bay's Cutest Valentine's Marketplace! Small businesses include artisans and food vendors 2175 Willow Pass Road

## YOUR PARTNER IN BUSINESS



Concord. [www.aquarianplants.com](http://www.aquarianplants.com).

**February 10, Roaring Twenties Dance,** 4 - 8 PM, Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Dr. Concord. [www.Concordreg.org](http://www.Concordreg.org)

**February 17, Barnes & Noble in Concord** is hosting a special event featuring local children's author Doré Ripley of Yellow Duck Press whose enchanting stories captivate young minds. 1 PM to 3 PM. Barnes & Noble, The Veranda, 2025 Diamond Blvd Suite 125, Concord

**February 23, Concord Chamber Crab Feed,** 5:30-9:30 PM. Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd. Concord. <https://www.concordchamber.com/>

**February 24, Summer Camp Expo & Job Fair,** 11:30 AM - 1 PM. We will be hosting on-the-spot interviews for seasonal positions including summer camp counselors Todos Santos Plaza, Concord

**February 25, East Bay Card Show,** 7 AM - 2 PM, Dealers, collectors and autograph guests. Sports cards, Sports memorabilia, Autographs, Pokemon, TCG, Funko Collectibles & more. 415) 470-2670 Concord Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr, Concord. <https://www.sportscardinvestor.com/event/east-bay-card-show>

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market**  
<https://www.pcfma.org>  
Todos Santos Plaza.  
Tuesdays, 10AM- 2PM Year Round

### LIBRARY

February 9 ongoing, AARP Tax-Aide, 10 AM - 3PM AARP Tax-Aide will provide free tax preparation services by appointment only at the Concord Library every Friday and Saturday, starting on February 2nd and continuing until April 13th.

*Concord Library, 2900 Salvio Street, Concord. For full list <https://ccclib.org>*

## MARTINEZ

### CLUBS

**Martinez Rotary Club** meets weekly, 5-6 PM on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. Campbell Theatre, 636 Ward Street., Martinez <http://www.martinezrotary.org> Pleasant Hill. <https://pleasanthillrotary.org/>

**St Vincent de Paul Food Pantry,** Every Saturday from 9am to 10am. Located between Castro and Estudillo Streets. (Behind St. Catherine of Siena Church). Any one in need of food welcome! Call 925-788-7409 for further information

### EVENTS

**February 10, Downtown Martinez Wine & Chocolate Stroll 2024.** 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Sample delicious wines and chocolate treats! 649 Main St #106, Martinez, Block next to Starbucks. <https://downtownmartinez.org>

**February 11, R & B BRUNCH.** 10 AM - 3 PM. Join us for a lit R&B Brunch, where we'll groove to R&B, indulge in delicious food, bottles, and vibe with the coolest crowd in town! Market & Main, 610 Main St, Martinez

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market**  
<https://www.pcfma.org>  
Sundays, 9AM-1PM, Year Round.

## PLEASANT HILL

### EVENTS

**February 10, California Writer's Club: Brooke Warner: The Three Qualities of a Good Memoir,** 11 AM - 2 PM, Zio Fraedo's, 611 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org>

**February 23, Blue Devils Crab Feed,** 5 PM, Pleasant Hill Community Center, 320 Civic Dr. Pleasant Hill. <https://www.bluedevils.org>

### LIBRARY

**February 20, Anime Club,** 10:45 - 11:45 AM, Enjoy different anime shows with other teens (12 to 18) Shows will be decided by the group, with snacks provided by the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library. 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month.  
*Pleasant Hill Library, 12 Monticello Avenue. For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>*

## WALNUT CREEK

### EVENTS

**February 18 Wedding Faire,** 2 PM - 4 PM, Walnut Creek Marriott, 2355 North Main Street, Walnut Creek

**February 19, SIR Branch 116 Luncheon,** 11:30 AM. Speaker: Jim Griesemer - "AI - Is it a tool or a companion?" Boundary Oaks Golf Course, 3800 Valley Vista Rd., Walnut Creek, Call 925-322-1318 or email to [luncheon116@gmail.com](mailto:luncheon116@gmail.com) [www.branch116.org](http://www.branch116.org)

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market**  
<http://www.cccfm.org>

Sundays 9AM-1PM, Year Round. Locust Street between Cole and Lacassie St <http://www.cccfm.org/walnut-creek-market/>

**Diablo Valley Farmers Market** North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Shadelands, Walnut Creek, Saturdays 9AM-1PM Year Round 1799 Locust St. [www.cafarmersmkts.com](http://www.cafarmersmkts.com)  
**Rossmoor Farmers Market** Rossmoor residents and their families only. Fridays 9AM-1PM, Golden Rain Rd. <http://www.cafarmersmkts.com/rossmoor-farmers-market>

### LIBRARY

**February 12, Tai Chi** 10:15am - 11:15am. T'ai-chi Ch'uan is an

ancient Chinese art which combines meditation in movement and healthful exercise. The training includes the practice of a 37 posture form which teaches relaxation, balance and strength.

*Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N Broadway. For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>*

### LESHER CENTER

**February 1, An Evening With The Kingston Trio.** 7PM.

**February 1 - 11, Synergy Theater's Adventure Serial: A Spontaneous Globetrotting Quest!** Thursdays - Saturdays at 8:15 pm and Sundays at 3:15 pm. Synergy Theater. com

**February 3, The ABBA Concert Experience** 8 PM.

**February 9, 10, Diablo Ballet's Sleeping Beauty's Wedding**

**March 3, Rite of Spring, Presented by Diablo Symphony Orchestra** 2 PM

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

## Other Cities

### EVENTS

**SIR Branch 19 will hold its Monthly Luncheon,** 11 AM, Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd., Pittsburg. This will be the Annual Holiday Luncheon. Members are invited to bring guests. [www.sirinc2.org/branch19](http://www.sirinc2.org/branch19) 925 338-1996 for more information.

**February 17, Tri-Valley Writers Chapter of the California Writers Club** presents Michelle Chouinard, USA-Today and Publishers Weekly Bestselling Author. 2 PM. Room 2470 at Las Positas College 3000 Campus Hill Dr. in Livermore. Check-in begins at 1:30 p.m. Email your RSVP to [treasurer@trivalleywriters.org](mailto:treasurer@trivalleywriters.org) by Thursday, February 15

**February 18, Antioch Lapidary Club Rock Show,** 10 AM - 5 PM, <https://antiochlapidaryclub.com>, 425 Fulton Shipyard Road in Antioch on the Second Thursday evening of every month at 6:00 PM! Contra Costa County Event Center, 1201 W 10th St, Antioch

**February 23 thru March 2, Country Costa County Honor Jazz Bands 2024** 4 PM, Los Medanos College, 2700 E Leland Rd, Pittsburg. <https://gjif.org/event/country-costa-county-honor-jazz-bands-2024/>

**February 24-25, TreasureFest, The Bay's Monthly Curated Festival,** 10 AM - 4 PM Features the best of the Bay Area. 400+ vintage & antique curators, crafts & makers, 35+ top-rated food trucks and eateries. Listen to live music. Treasure Island - San Francisco <https://www.treasurefest.com> Info: (415) 898-0245.

**SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES** by the 20th of the month before Issue month. [diablogazette@gmail.com](mailto:diablogazette@gmail.com)

# Enjoy A Romantic 3-Course Valentine

## Dinner at Concord's Finest Italian Restaurants



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Lunch: Monday-Sunday 11:00am-2:30pm | Dinner: 4:30pm - 9:30 pm

# American Dream TV to Feature Luna Restaurant, Concord

On the cover of this edition is a shot of the American Dream TV show being taped inside Luna Restaurant of Concord.

The "American Dream" is a national TV show with an EMMY nominated production team. The local edition is hosted by real estate professionals within the Bay Area, and more specifically, for central Contra Costa County, Deborah Zacharatos of Keller Williams and Brian Reeg of CMG Mortgage. They were selected to be the "Voice" for this market.

American Dream is not a reality show but rather a real show designed to feature the best in real estate. Zacharatos and Reeg, a husband-and-wife team, were chosen by the producers because of their long-standing success in their respective fields.

Zacharatos has done real estate with Keller Williams for the past eighteen years and has won several performance awards throughout her career. Reeg has been providing mortgages for the past thirty years.

"We want to show people being real and living the life in the Bay Area."

Zacharatos and Reeg's taped their first show in October 2023 which aired in December. They featured a Fashion Show Gala fundraiser at Macy's in Walnut Creek organized by the Women's Council of Realtors. The beneficiaries were Cinnamongirl, Inc. of Oakland, Special Olympics and Rainbow Community Center.

That show aired on CBS affiliate, KPIX. In 2024, American Dream plans to stream more and will be seen on Amazon Prime, Travel Channel, Roku, Amazon Fire, and YouTube TV as well as various social media sites.

For their second show, they interviewed farmers at the Farmers Market at Todos Santos who supply fresh produce not only Luna, but other restaurants in the surrounding area. Then the crew went inside Luna to put a spotlight on its operation and on Chef/Owner Habib El Jacifi.

Each show will be a compilation of five four- to five-minute segments of businesses, fundraisers, and activities from different communities also produced by other realtors around the Bay Area.

Their next show planned will feature a segment on Recycling and why it matters for the community to leave as little of a footprint as possible.



Brian Reeg and Debora Zacharatos are local host American Dream TV Show.



Taping a scene inside Macy's in Walnut Creek.



Makeup!



Brian Reeg and Debora Zacharatos visit the Farmers Market at Todos Santos for the American Dream TV show.



Chef/owner Habib is ready to serve wine.

**Todd Wheat**

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## Dropping Rates:

# What Will The 2024 Real Estate Market Look Like?

From last year to this year, average home prices in Concord are up 1.6%. In Clayton, they rose four percent. This is not the double digits we saw in years past, but it is not a drop either.

The interest rates, of course, drive prices, and as they become lower, home prices are likely to increase as buyers come back into the market and bid. In that respect, the prognosis for 2024 seems favorable.

The predictions are that the Fed's will drop rates again in March; however, even if they don't, we are in a better position than last year. Last October the high rate was 8.03%, and as of January 4, it dropped to 6.70%. So, the pressure is down at this point.

If the rates hit 5.99% as they did in February 2023, well, you would want your home to be on the market for sale. It would be enticing to buyers who would be anxious to lock up that home before rates pop up again. Perception is everything. Rates going up from 5.5% to 5.99% do not cause a stir but going down from a high of 8.03% to 5.99% is a whole different mindset.

At 5.99% or below — that will be the big month for sales and price increases due to the bidding that is likely to occur for the few homes

available to buy. We are still at an all-time low for homes on the market. Some homeowners have 3% interest rates and sitting pat. Do you blame them?

There are a few clients that purchased this year, hoping to lock in a good home price, (buy the home, date the rate) who are also waiting for the rates to drop for a refinance. The refinance market keeps the lenders in business too. My preferred lender sends reminders out to those clients when the rates get below a certain number, to give them the opportunity before things change again. This is a very valuable service.

In fact, if that is your situation, the best thing to do is contact your lender, get your application in with updated documents, and update them monthly. Then when the rate goes down, you won't miss that rate lock and can refinance.

For this kind of information or what steps to get ready for selling, buying, or investing, 1031 exchanges, rentals, and property management, I want you to have a great real estate experience.

If I were your Realtor, I would say "Let's get started."

## INTEREST RATES

# HOW LOW CAN THEY GO?

### Avg 30-yr, fixed-rate mortgage

<p>CURRENT January 4, 2024 <b>6.70%*</b></p>	<p>ONE YEAR AGO January 4, 2023 6.41%*</p>	<p>PREVIOUS PEAK October 19, 2023 <b>8.03%*</b></p>
		<p>PREVIOUS LOW February 2, 2023 <b>5.99%*</b></p>

\*no points purchased Source: Mortgage News Daily

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I have not and will not verify or investigate information provided or supplied by third parties.

## 13th Annual Spring Brewfest Returns to Todos Santos

The Brewing Network's Spring Brews Festival returns to Todos Santos Plaza in Concord for its 13th year on Saturday, March 30.

Heralded as one of the best craft beer festivals in the Bay Area, local and nearby craft beer enthusiasts will arrive (mostly on Bart), to enjoy four hours outdoors of live music, food, and unlimited tastings from 60 or more of the best craft beer breweries in California. from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Tickets are \$65 and include unlimited pours and a commemorative glass. This is a 21 and over only event so all attendees must be of legal drinking age. Everyone must purchase a ticket to enter. Designated Driver tickets are available at the gate only and are \$20.

As in prior years, this year's event is a benefit for the TSBA Arts Foundation, which helps fund the summer music program in Todos Santos Park, benefit for the TSBA



Arts Foundation, which helps fund the Concord Family Fourth of July Parade and summer music program in Todos Santos Park.

Rain or shine the beer will flow, and with the Concord BART station just two blocks away, this afternoon event will be sure to satisfy locals wanting to enjoy world class beer for a great cause.

DOGS OR CHILDREN (including infants) are not allowed) within festival gates. Refunds will not be given for any reason after March 22, 2024

To purchase tickets, go to Eventbrite.com/ and enter Spring Brews fest in their search bar.

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## Warming Syrah

Syrah is one of those dense red wines that warms you by just looking at it. A robust wine, Syrah has black fruit flavors of berry and dried plum as well as notes of tobacco and dark soil. Also, Syrah is most often aged in toasted oak barrels which impart the flavor of smokey bacon. Here is a meal that pairs each course with a different version of Syrah wine.

New World Syrah from California, Oregon, and Washington tends to be more fruit-forward and lower in acid than French Syrah.

Potato Leek Soup with Sausage Lardon is a great starter on a chilly winter night. This soup is rich and creamy and accented with pork flavors; it is perfect for Syrah. The fat balances the high alcohol and pork flavors are echoed in the wine.

In the Old World (read: Europe), Syrah is celebrated in southern France. The most elegant Syrah wines come from the Northern Rhone and have fine-grained tannins. Slightly more rustic versions are found in the Southern Rhone and the vast Languedoc-Roussillon.

I have chosen Alton Brown's Pot Roast recipe to pair with a French Syrah as the main course. I like Alton's recipe because it uses balsamic vinegar (to balance the higher acid found in French wines), cocktail olives (which have a briny, earthy characteristic) and raisins (to echo the dark fruit in the wine). Add your favorite starch to catch the juices and something green to make your mother happy. You now have a complete plate.

End the meal with a touch of sweetness. Head back to the states where Syrah is often made into a delicious port-style wine. The deep flavors of the Syrah grape intensify as the grapes hang on the vine. The high alcohol content of the wine is muted by the sweetness that remains when fermentation is stopped early.

The classic pairing with port-style wines is Stilton; however, if you prefer milder cheese, try Aged Gruyere. The tiny, crunchy crystals in Gruyere are a nice contrast to the silky texture of the wine. And the fruit in the wine is intensified by the sharp, nutty flavors in the cheese.

So, go on. Pair Up!

*Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. lasommelier@gmail.com*

## Alton Brown's Pot Roast

### INGREDIENTS

1 (2-pound) blade cut chuck roast  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
2 teaspoons cumin  
Vegetable oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
5 to 6 cloves garlic, smashed  
1 cup tomato juice



1/3 cup balsamic vinegar  
1 cup cocktail olives, drained and broken  
1/2 cup dark raisins

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 200°. Place a wide, heavy skillet over high heat for 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, rub both sides of meat with the salt and cumin. Brown meat on both sides and remove from pan. Add just enough vegetable oil to cover the bottom of the pan then add the onion and garlic. Stir constantly until onion is softened.

Add the tomato juice, vinegar, olives, and raisins. Bring to a boil and reduce the liquid by half. Create a pouch with wide, heavy duty aluminum foil. Place half the reduced liquid/solid mixture on the foil, add the roast, and then top with the remaining mixture.

Close the pouch and wrap tightly in another complete layer of foil. Cook for 3 to 3 1/2 hours until very tender. Puree the cooking liquids and solids into a sauce to serve alongside if desired.

Yield: 6-8 servings

## Potato Leek Soup with Sausage Lardon



### INGREDIENTS

1 large or 2 small leeks, about 1 pound  
2 bay leaves  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 strips bacon, chopped  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
5 cups chicken stock  
1 to 1 1/4 pounds russet potatoes, diced  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
3/4 teaspoon white pepper  
1/2 to 3/4 cup crème fraîche or heavy

## Taylor Thrift, Opens a New Pleasant Hill Trail

How's that headline for an attention-getter? Visit Pleasant Hill is not trying to confuse you with their most recent press release introducing a new shopping experience.

"We are pretty sure Taylor Swift doesn't 'thrift,' but her flare for style is an inspiration to all of us to go out and find our own individual styles," the release teases.

Visit Pleasant Hill has recently introduced its "Taylor Thrift Trail," named appropriately as the town's large selection of thrift stores are aptly adjacent to the main thoroughfare, Taylor Boulevard.

Pleasant Hill offers a wide range of thrift shopping adventures, featuring a diverse array of stores catering to various tastes and preferences. Additionally, the community in and around Pleasant Hill tends to donate high-quality items giving thrifters (or is it thrifties) plenty of quality items to choose from, including everything from clothing and footwear to household items, furniture, décor and jewelry.

Thrift is not only budget-friendly, but it is the right thing to do for its sustainability factor as well as contributing to in-need communities that are the beneficiaries of the money raised at the thrift store level. Meaning, your purchases are charitable contributions as well.

Visit Pleasant Hill also notes the city's is also home to a great many diversions, including some of the best hiking trails (many suitable for off-leash companions); culinary options that range from grab 'n go to more formal settings; health and wellness facilities; and clean, safe, and affordable hotel accommodations, many of which offer free parking.

So, take a tax break and go Taylor Thrifting. Here are some of Visit Pleasant Hill's favorites stops along the trail.

### Youth Homes Thrift Shop - 15 Vivian Drive, Suite B

Not only will you find unique treasures (mostly clothes, shoes, jewelry), for an incredible deal, but shopping here reduces your carbon footprint and helps support programs that empower foster youth and youth impacted by trauma.

### The Salvation Army - 1806 Linda Drive

This is the "Walmart" of thrift stores in the East Bay, with the largest assortment of clothing and home furnishings. Also of note, this and the other Bay Area stores are the key to providing the ARC programs that are the hallmark of The Salvation Army's successful, enriching reintegration ministry. When you make a purchase here, you give a second chance to people

cream

2 tsp. fresh thyme or 1 tsp. dried thyme

2 tablespoons snipped chives, garnish

2 oz. link sausage, cut into 3/4" x 1/2" pieces, fried crisp garnish

### DIRECTIONS

Trim the green portions of the leek. Using a sharp knife, halve the white part of the leek lengthwise and rinse well under cold running water to rid the leek of any sand. Slice thinly crosswise and set aside.

In a large soup pot over medium heat, melt the butter and add the



struggling in life while also giving new life to the items in your shopping cart.

### Goodwill Store & Donation Center - 1699 Contra Costa Boulevard

The Goodwill brand of stores is universal, but this particular outlet features a broad selection of clothes, accessories, and household items. The beauty of shopping at any one of Goodwill's thrift stores is helping them fulfill their promise to "Give second chances through training and the dignity of work."

### Hospice Thrift Shoppe - 959 Contra Costa Boulevard

The Hospice Thrift Shoppe features a wide range of vintage items, clothing, fine and costume jewelry, collectibles, furniture, housewares, art, books, CDs, and DVDs - all donated by the local community. Hospice East Bay is a pioneer hospice established in 1977 to create support for patients who want to die at home.

### St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store - 2815 Contra Costa Boulevard

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul provides a source of inexpensive merchandise for the poor and those that are looking for a great deal, in support of the organization's mission to provide learning opportunities for participants in the Workforce Development Program.

### Estates Consignment - 1500 Contra Costa Boulevard

The only "commercial" shop on the list, Estates Consignment features distinguished estate furnishings, upscale home-boutique overstocks, furniture storeroom floor displays, model home furnishings, fine jewelry and watches. It is also a licensed pawn broker.

Before you go, check the stores' hours of operation as they sometimes change without notice. For a diverse selection of finds, check out several stores as each thrift store has its own specialties or focus.

Download Visit Pleasant Hill's recently launched I LOVE Pleasant Hill (digital) Passport, for the inside track on offers, discounts, and other information as well as various hotel options that offer budget-friendly, economy accommodations.

bacon. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the bacon is very soft and has rendered most of its fat. Add the chopped leeks and cook until wilted, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and bring to a boil. Add the bay leaves, chicken stock, potatoes, salt and white pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are falling apart and the soup is very flavorful.

Remove the bay leaves and puree the soup with an immersion blender. Stir in the crème fraîche, thyme and adjust the seasoning. Top with sausage lardon.

Yield: 8 cups





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# Happy Valentines Day

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# CSI: Your Garden

What's eating my apples? Who's munching on my lettuce? What's that white stuff all over my rose leaves? Your garden is full of crimes that are waiting to be solved. Are you ready to play Crime Scene Investigator? Dust off your magnifying glass and whip out your smartphone. Let's figure out who done it!

### What's attacking my apples (plums, grapes, berries, etc.)?



Partially damaged apple points to a mouse or vole - Courtesy Shutterstock

Not only humans love the taste of sugar, and fruits are naturally loaded with fructose, a healthy and easily digested sugar.

**Prime Suspects:** Rodents, larger mammals, birds. If your fruit is chewed at night, rodents such as roof or Norway rats and mice are the most likely suspects. If damage occurs during daylight hours, tree or ground squirrels are the criminals. If fruit disappears completely at night, larger mammals such as deer or coyotes can be the culprits. And if your fruit is destroyed by a bunch of smaller holes, birds have been pecking.

**Apprehending the Criminal:** Live or kill traps are most effective against rodents, but for larger mammals, get out your night vision game camera and "capture" the suspects in the act. No poisons, please.

**Preventing future attacks:** Net your trees, vines, or bushes with bird netting to minimize damage, install 7-foot-tall deer fencing around your trees and bushes, and vary your rodent trap baits every few days to renew their interest. You can rotate through peanut butter, almonds, walnuts, peanuts in shell, fruit slices, and succulent leaves.

### What's chomping my lettuces (tomatoes, squashes, broccoli,



Eaten veggie leaves mean snails & slugs are present - Courtesy Shutterstock

etc.)?

Creatures cannot distinguish between naturally occurring food sources and your backyard vegetables.

**Prime Suspects:** Rodents, snails/slugs, larger mammals, caterpillars. Smaller, incomplete damage often closer to the ground indicates snails/slugs, or mice and voles.

If chewing is roundish and smooth, it's likely snails and slugs. Small rodents will leave tooth or scrape marks. Mice and voles are good climbers and can get to higher-up tomatoes also. If damage is more complete, with just nubs left, or the plant completely pulled out, then deer or rabbits can be the culprits. If only leaves are chewed without touching the fruit, tomato hornworm caterpillars, earwigs, or other worms are suspected.

**Apprehending the Criminal:** Tomato hornworms and other caterpillars/worms can be picked off and dispatched but wear gloves. Small snap traps are effective with small rodents. Modern snail/slug bait is effective and also breaks down into a natural fertilizer over time. Only fencing or exclusion will work for larger mammals.

**Preventing future attacks:** Excluding pests from your veggie beds is best. So, install your fencing, raise the beds off the ground, set traps, apply snail/slug bait, and build hoop houses with netting. Note that for all-natural caterpillar, worm, and earwig control, welcome birds into your garden.

### What's that white (or sticky) stuff on my roses (clematis vines, or other ornamentals)?

Mealy bugs, scales, spittle bugs, aphids, and molds or mildews can all produce white or sticky stuff on leaves or stems while they suck or smother the life



Aphids can be sprayed off with a jet of water - Courtesy Shutterstock

out of your beautiful bloomers.

**Prime Suspects:** Fungi grow almost exclusively on leaves, with white upper sides or white, black (black spot), or orange (rust) on lower sides of leaves. Leaves will often be wilted or misshapen. If you find foamy or bubbly white collections on leaves or stems, there are probably mealy bugs or spittle bugs inside the camouflaging foam.

Scales are bumpy and brown/black and line the plant stems. Mealy bugs, spittle bugs, scales and aphids all produce sticky clear honeydew which can turn leaves black when it collects dust. The presence of ants, which love honeydew, is also indicative that you have an infestation.

**Apprehending the Criminal:** Resist the temptation to spray toxic fungicides or insecticides. Warmer, drier weather is often all it takes for fungi and sucking bugs to dry up or be



Ants love honeydew from scales - Courtesy Shutterstock

eaten by beneficial creatures. Aphids can be sprayed off leaves and stems with a water jet. Insecticidal soap is effective for severe insect infestations and is less toxic to beneficial garden creatures such as ladybugs and birds.

**Preventing future attacks:** Planting your ornamentals in the right place with the right growing conditions is the long-term solution to fungal or insect damage. Read planting directions carefully or ask garden center staff for advice. Sun, water, soil PH? A happy ornamental plant will be pest tolerant.

**Seasonal Note:** Prepare your growing beds now for planting next month by mixing your home-grown compost or a slow acting balanced fertilizer into the soil to replenish it with nutrients lost during last year's growing season.

Do you think you have garden transgression not covered above? Email me descriptions and photos and we will investigate the scene of the crime together. NakedGardener@diablogazette.com.




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## aRt Students Resonate with Qualities of the Dragon

2024 is the year of the dragon. Chinese new year runs February 10, 2024, to January 28, 2025. People born in dragon years usually possess natural courage, tenacity, and intelligence, often displaying enthusiasm and confidence. This is what I found while searching on Google.

“In Chinese culture, the dragon holds a significant place as an auspicious and extraordinary creature, unparalleled in talent and excellence. It symbolizes power, mobility, honor, luck, and success.”

Hmmm, very interesting. That is what we seem to have here at aRt Cottage, a full roster of 36 intelligent, enthusiastic, and confident students. These students range in age from preschool to senior citizens, ages 4 to 84 years old. They come and attend private and semi-private classes, one-hour sessions once a week.

aRt Cottage is not just a local gallery, but it is also a very active studio where participating students create what they want.

There is no set curriculum and their teacher, me, is their cheerleader. The students show me their work and

we talk about it. They decide what they want to do and what medium they would like to explore. I provide my time, materials, and experience. From there, we make art.

The students are empowering themselves. I watch as they, through their courageous process, explore with the absolute certainty that the result they are looking for can and will happen. Their tenacity, enthusiasm, and confidence echo the of the symbolic dragon.

Whether in the making of a clay pot, a self-portrait, a plein air painting, a sewing project, or a watercolor peacock, they tapped their enthusiasm and courage and found success.

The students hope you will come by and visit us and watch us work on some of our dragons as the Chinese New Year approaches. Our back room will have them on display for you throughout February. Come in and



MacKenzie & Lindsay on wheel



Lori Larks plein air painting



Zaidy & Adriel's first sewing project

browse for free. Open 11:00 to 5:00 Wednesday through Saturday at 2238 Mount Diablo Street in downtown Concord.

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# BD Performing Arts CRAB FEED

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BD PERFORMING ARTS IS A NON-PROFIT 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION BASED IN CONCORD, CA.

## Clayton Theater Company Presents Murder Mystery 'But Why Bump Off Barnaby?'

Clayton Theater Company (CTC) is proud to announce its spring production of "But Why Bump Off Barnaby?" by Rick Abbot.

This lunatic show poses a fascinating mystery. Barnaby Folcey is murdered at a family gathering. It transpires that he had a motive to murder everybody else, but no one had a reason to want him dead. Meanwhile, there is a secret treasure to be found, a limerick to decode, and all sorts of mishaps to be avoided before the killer is

finally unmasked.

Directed by La Tonya Watts. Cast. Nathalie Archangel, James Bradley Jr., Kevin Coren, Bill Dietz, Deborah Huaco, Megan Larsen, Chip Renner, Peggy Scalise, Maya Rath

The 10 performances run March 8-17, at Endeavor Hall, 6008 Center St., in Clayton Tickets are \$22-\$29. To purchase online, go to ClaytonTheatreCompany.com or call 925-334-0880.



I-R: Bill Dietz, Megan Larsen, Deborah Huaco, Kevin Coren, Nathalie Archangel, Chip Renner, Peggy Scalise, James Bradley Jr., and Maya Rath at rehearsals. Photo credit La Tonya Watts.

## 10 Student Finalists Selected in Contra Costa Youth Local Shark Tank Competition

The top ten finalists of the Contra Costa Shark Tank Youth Competition have been announced. The students' entrepreneurial projects cover various industries, including health care, environmentalism, and health and wellness.

Contra Costa Shark Tank Youth Competition applicants are evaluated based on their enthusiasm for entrepreneurship, how the business is presented, the viability of the business, and how the prize money will be used to launch a new business or grow an existing business.

The competition is open to all Contra Costa County students in kindergarten to 12th grade. The program promotes youth entrepreneurship and teaches important life skills, including perseverance, self-confidence, and financial literacy.

Winners receive \$1,000 (first place), \$500 (second place), and \$250 (third place). The competition was created by Maya Hammerman, an entrepreneur and Campolindo High School student, to inspire kids in Contra Costa County to explore entrepreneurship and new business ideas.

Here are the 10 finalists and their projects:

Nicolas Angel-Ordonez & Shashank Koundinya, 11th Grade, San Ramon Valley High School — Miracle Algae

Fatimah Hussain, 12th grade, Dougherty Valley High School - Workout Wizard

Himna Imam & Mahum Malik, 9th grade, Venture & Dougherty Valley High School - Tied Up in a Bow

Ronen Jain, 10th grade, Monte Vista High School – ElderSafe

Archit Kundu, 5th grade, Bella Vista Elementary School - Experimental Kids

Hunter Smith, 5th grade, Burton Valley Elementary, Lafayette — SportzCity

Lydia Stewart, 7th grade, Homeschool, Antioch — Lydia's Soap

Valerie Castellanos, Angie Alvarenga, Savannah Johnston, Giovanni Pérez. 7th grade, Summit Tamalpais, Richmond — Loonies

Hector Espinoza, 12th grade, Freedom High, Oakley — Synchrona Studio

Beatrice Roberge, 12th grade, Campolindo High, Moraga — Scrubwoofer™

The ten finalists will compete in the Finalist Pitch Event on February 6, 2024, at the Lafayette Library (3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, CA 94549). The judges include Jason Gardner, Founder, Chairman, and Former CEO of Marqeta, Inc.; Stephanie Williams, CFO and Controller of Pacific Gas & Electric Company; Roxanne Christophe, Founder and CEO of Girls Crushing It; Anthony Marino, President of thredUp; and Maya Hammerman, Founder of Moon Blossom Collection.

We wish these students the best of luck at the final pitch.

More information about the event, including tickets, is available at <https://contracostasharktank.org/>.



## Visit Concord Visitor Center: A Hub of Delightful Discoveries for Locals and Visitors

by Beth Javens, President & CEO

The Visit Concord Visitor Center has evolved into a resourceful spot that offers an abundance of experiences and information for visitors and locals alike. With all its offerings and community collaborations, it is a testament to Concord's rich history, vibrant arts scene, and warm hospitality from tantalizing treats, outdoor activities, to artistic wonders.

### Rachel Dunn Chocolates Returns

For years, Concord has enjoyed its very own Rachel Dunn chocolate factory. While it no longer operates in Concord, for a limited time, you can still enjoy Rachel Dunn delicious chocolates and famous Giant Apples at the Visitor Center just in time for Valentines.

### Explore the Spirit of Concord Merchandise

Beyond Rachel Dunn, the Visitor Center offers an array of Concord merchandise. From sweatshirts and beanies to hats, shirts, towels, blankets, socks, keychains, lip balm, and more – there is something for everyone to get in the spirit of Concord. You can also pick up Concord Taco Trail and Beer Trail maps to guide you and your guests through a variety of our local flavors.

### A Blend of Art, History, and Nature

In collaboration with the Concord Arts Association, Concord Historical Society, East Bay Regional Parks,

and Mt. Diablo State Park, the Visitor Center boasts visual displays, printed materials, and park merchandise to help you with your local explorations.

The Concord Historical Society has enriched the center with a complete series of historic photographs, illustrating the city's growth from the mid-1800s to modern times. The collection is a captivating visual journey through Concord's unique history.

The Concord Arts Association contributes to the center's charm by presenting art for our gallery wall with unique pieces and exclusive postcards created by local artists updated every quarter.

### Tranquil Meeting Area

Our center's meeting area opens up to a lush collection of plants and flowers along with a stunning garden wall mural by artist Arsenio Baca. The serene setting creates an atmosphere of beauty and comfort.

We even welcome your furry friends. Bring them to the Visitor Center, where they will be greeted with dog treats. Capture the moment with a photo, and your pup's picture will be proudly displayed in the center's office.

Open from 10 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday, we invite you to explore and enjoy the Concord treasures the center offers you. We look forward to meeting you.

## For the Love of Pets

by Jill Hedgecock, [Jillhedgecock.com](http://Jillhedgecock.com)

# What Do You Want, the Chicken or Egg?

Recently, there have been multiple outbreaks of avian flu in commercial poultry farms in Sonoma and Marin Counties, resulting in higher-than-normal costs of eggs in grocery stores. So, is it worthwhile to raise chickens to offset the costs of eggs?

There are great benefits to raising chickens. Besides the obvious one of providing a steady supply of tastier fresh eggs that are that are usually more nutritious, chickens have personalities, provide a fun source of entertainment, and do not require much land.

There are also a variety of chickens that can produce a diversity of egg sizes, speckling, and colors. For example, if you want blue eggs, you should consider either Ameraucanas, Araucanas, and Cream Legbars. Raising chickens also promotes a sustainable lifestyle by recycling vegetable scraps and because their manure can be composted into a rich garden soil.

Tove Danovich, author of "Under the Influence, Backyard Chickens and the People Who Love Them" describes some considerations before acquiring a backyard chicken. First, if only the eggs are the main point to raising, chickens stop laying when they molt, but they still consume a lot of food. This is why many industrial egg-laying facilities will cull their hens before they reach two years, despite the chicken's typical lifespan of seven or eight years. But if you like the idea of a unique pet, the hens have a more humane life.

There are economic downsides to raising chickens. Commercial chicken feed can be pricey, not to mention the startup costs of building a chicken coop. The birds can be messy and smelly. It is also possible that they may attract pests such as mites and internal parasites like worms. There are other health concerns for the birds that might arise, such as egg-bound hens (rare in well-cared for hens) or prolapsed vents. Also, in addition to lags in egg-laying because of molting, hens typically stop producing eggs in the height of summer and depths



of winter yet the costs of feeding the hens continues.

If you are fed up with the high cost of eggs due to avian flu outbreaks or are excited to raise chickens as pets, research any ordinances in your neighborhood. Most urban areas do not allow roosters. There may be other residential restrictions, such as the proximity of coops to other residents and how many hens are allowed.

So now that you know more about raising chickens, do you want the chicken or the egg? If you only want to avoid buying expensive eggs, it might make more sense to pay grocery store prices and hope the avian flu outbreak is soon contained.

*Jill Hedgecock is a local author. Her new release "In Shadow's Reflection" is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel along with "Between Shadow's Eyes" (book 1) and "From Shadow's Perspective (book 2) are available on amazon.com.*

## Concord Dog Parks To Close For Maintenance

The City of Concord's two dog parks are scheduled to be closed for annual turf renovation and general maintenance.

Newhall Park Paw Patch dog park will be closed from Monday, February 5 through Monday, March 11, 2024. The City's Baldwin Park dog park will be closed beginning on Monday, March 11 and will reopen on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.


Renovations will include aeration, re-seeding, fertilizing, adding organic mulch, and allowing time for the natural turf grass to grow and fill in the worn areas. Gopher abatement will also be performed. Consistent turf renovations will keep the facilities attractive and safe.



Signs have been posted at the two facilities The City will also update its "Rain Information" hotline at 925-671-3479 in the event of any future changes.



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# Around Martinez



## Puttin' Paint Where It Ain't!

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

Have you ever seen a 6-foot-tall Alameda whipsnake? Or a 10-foot-tall California newt? The new mural on Alhambra Way in Martinez has these and many other native species supersized to highlight our native plant and animal communities.

Jeff Sherwin, who spearheaded this effort said to me, "Seeing these animals at full size gives you a totally different perspective on them."

Jeff initially got the idea for a new mural in 2020. He wanted to make something to unify his community behind their mutual love of the natural landscape in Martinez.

"Martinez makes this an easy task because of how many nature lovers there are, as evidenced by all the open space," said Jeff. In partnership with the Friends of Alhambra Creek, he reached out to Illuminaries muralists with his vision and then initiated coordination with CalTrans, who owns the property, the underpass, and the approximately 3000 square feet of blank concrete canvas.

Illuminaries Murals and

Design (illuminares.net) is a Bay Area-based public art organization. Their frontman, Tim Hon, made Martinez his home a few years ago and brought his talents to the East Bay. Tim signed on and worked with Jeff to create an initial mockup of the mural to facilitate early discussions.

Jeff's first stop was Martinez City Hall. Upon initial support

Painting began in December 2023 and was completed in January 2024 with over 20 sets of hands, including Illuminaries artists and volunteers. Artists worked long hours, in the rain, at night, and even with Covid.

The positive culture of the



this idea to heart and allowed everyone who contributed to paint their names onto the wall as the components of the wall were painted. Even my 9-year-old son was welcomed to paint portions of the wall. When we walk by the completed mural now, he points out where his signature lies just below the topcoat.

concrete to the flowing blue of the Carquinez Strait, the bold orange of a Martinez sunset, and the bright green of the rolling Briones hills. I was so impressed by their artistic skill and how quickly they could use a spray can to transform a 2-dimensional swatch of color into a dynamic sturgeon bursting from the waters.

"Sometimes if you want to improve your neighborhood you have to be the one to do it. You will find out your strengths and limitations but you will also find help in unexpected places and you will force yourself out of your comfort zone because that is what is required."

Thank you, Jeff, for improving your neighborhood and for bringing colorful joy to Martinez.



from City Council, Jeff went to work securing grants and completing applications with City staff to submit to CalTrans. Early supporters included Martinez Arts Association, Martinez Kiwanis, PBF Energy, and Contra Costa Resource Conservation District. Ultimately, with community-wide support, they were able to raise more than double their original goal!

artists created a welcoming atmosphere with upbeat music, group meals, and plenty of laughter. They invited artists of all experience levels to contribute their creative talents.

The beauty of a mural is if you don't like it, you paint over and try again. They took

The artists of Illuminaries bring joy to their communities by creating colorful larger-than-life designs, living their mantra of "Puttin' Paint Where it Ain't." The Alhambra Way mural went from drab

## Dean Evans Paints Bay Unique Surroundings

Main Street Arts Gallery welcomes its newest member Dean Evans. His work focuses on the coastal areas and towns that surround the San Francisco Bay. Evans seeks out the parts of the Bay that have not been affected too much and still retain some of the area's uniqueness.

"Making paintings of these places is the best way I have to share my interest in their disappearing character and also preserves something of my past," Evans says.

Main Street Arts will be open on February 2 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. during Martinez First Fridays for an early viewing of these beautiful and outstanding expressions of the Bay.

The California Watercolor Association exhibit continues through February 25. After that they will have Assemblage Artist, Dave Kwinter's work on display. The public is invited to his reception March 1, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. during the Martinez First Fridays event.

Gallery visitors should remember to sign up for the monthly drawing for a free piece of work from one of our eleven Main Street Arts members.

December's drawing offered an



Paintings by Dean Evans: "Trinidad Bluffs," "Black Steer," "Hope Valley" and "Sonoma Coast"

original abstract by Mimi Wirth. January's drawing is offering a gorgeous Asian themed painting by Eric Carlstrom. February's prize will highlight an original work by Bonnie Fry.

"With February being the month for Valentines Day, elegant and original artwork could be the special gift that will last forever," says artist Samantha McNally, suggesting on behalf of the Gallery.

Main Street Arts Gallery, 613 Main St., Martinez, is open Wednesday through Saturday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, and on Sunday from 10:00 am to 2:00 p.m. A preview of the show is available at [www.mainstreetarts.net](http://www.mainstreetarts.net).

### AMP Real Estate & Staging

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### Where to start?

Knowing how to even get started can be overwhelming. From prepping your home for sale, getting connected with the mortgage people and products and even figuring how to start saving Courtney is here every step of the way.

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There are still appointments available! There's no better time than now to start. Reach out today to connect with Courtney at 925-818-9649 and discover your options!



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# Hillside has Opened, Hot Dog!

Martinez has waited a long time for Hillside, the new hot Dog and sausage eatery at 400 Ferry Street, to open.

When owners Preston Cerezo and Casey Spragens decided to move their business, Hillside Dawgz, from Concord, they admittedly had underestimated the workload facing them.

The two embarked upon thoroughly cleaning, painting, and restoring the facility themselves, which was delayed by illnesses, unexpected surprises, and Spragens' class schedule at Diablo Valley College.

"There was carpet on the walls that we were to remove and install sheet rock, but underneath the carpet was this beautiful wood paneling that we decided to restore instead," Spragens said of one of the more difficult and unplanned tasks.

Despite the challenges and setbacks like scraping paint off wood paneling and dealing with decades of neglect, they have finally opened their new taproom and eatery.

Dedicated to quality and variety, Hillside offers craft 1/4 lb. sausages with custom toppings, served on fresh bread from a local bakery, and a rotating



selection of up to 12 beers on tap. The fast-casual menu is certain to please the downtown and sports crowd. In addition to dogs, sausages and sides, options like chicken sandwiches, rice bowls, salads, and buffalo wings are soon to be added.

Order to go or dine in, Hillside has seating for 30 with two TVs to show big games. In the spring, patio seating will be added. The location is ideal.

"We can cater to people that want a quick bite to eat or who want to sit and enjoy a beer and fries. We are also catering to the sports crowd. There are a lot of people going downtown, to the baseball fields, kid sports, and adult sports and the Marina."

See their ad on the cover for more information. Visit their website for their complete menu at [Hillsidemartinez.com](http://Hillsidemartinez.com).

# Martinez Chamber Launches Community-Wide Events Calendar

The Martinez Chamber of Commerce has expanded the functionality of their website to create a communitywide calendar events accessible to everyone. Within the website, go to the events tab to view three options, Chamber Events, Calendar of Events and Submit your Event. Anyone can submit an event.

"Residents, businesses, associations, non-profits, schools, etc., are all welcome to submit upcoming events directly to our website by clicking on and completing the submit your events green button. They do not need to be members of the chamber to submit," says Chamber President/CEO Lisa Bonnington.

All submissions are welcome and the site allows for graphics and hyperlinks.



Upon submission, the events are reviewed internally to determine if they meet community event standards and guidelines. Once approved they are published on the calendar.

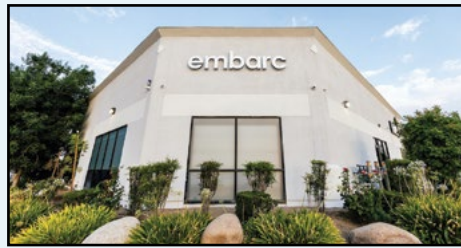
This is a cooperative effort with the City of Martinez and Downtown Martinez & Co. Downtown Martinez & Co will continue to maintain events listings for downtown events on their website.

"We look forward to community contributions so visitors and residents alike will be able to view a centralized calendar. We also have tabs to post job openings and promotions but these are exclusively for Martinez Chamber Members," Bonnington stated.

# City Staff Recommends Expansion of School Buffer Zone, Other Changes in Cannabis Regulations

by Craig Lazzeretti, Martinez News And Views

Responding to rising public concerns about teen marijuana use, city staff proposes expanding the minimum buffer zone between cannabis dispensaries in the city and schools, daycares and youth centers.



city's two existing dispensaries, Embarc on Alhambra Avenue and Velvet on Sunrise Drive, currently comply with the proposed 1,000-foot buffer. But borders the Martinez Adult Education campus.

In a press release issued by the school district at the time, Cammack wrote:

Although students won't directly access the products of the dispensary due to strict industry regulations, there are concerns about having any business on a shared property border that requires extensive security provisions and multiple security guards.

Additionally, the current location may limit the potential uses of the Martinez Adult School property. In prior years, the Adult School housed a preschool, and more recently overflow parking for Alhambra High School, both of which the district could not operate in good conscience if a cannabis dispensary is opened on this shared property border.

The city is also suggesting the council reconsider the ordinance requirement for 24/7 on-site security at the dispensaries. Despite the requirement being clearly spelled out in the current ordinance passed by the council 2019, it wasn't enforced until after the fatal August officer-involved shooting of a 20-year-old burglary suspect, Tahmon Wilson, at Velvet, where no security guards were present.

The staff report notes that a survey conducted by the city's cannabis consulting firm found that only three other Bay Area jurisdictions with retail cannabis dispensaries currently require 24/7 on-site security (Fairfield, Suisun City and Vacaville).

The updated proposals in the staff report still fall short of what was requested by the Public Health Institute, which lobbies for responsible local cannabis policies designed to protect youths.

The proposal is among of suite of proposed modifications to the city's cannabis ordinance, including security standards.

The staff report proposed modifications to the ordinance to include the expanded school buffer zone (which would match the standard currently in Contra Costa County's ordinance for unincorporated areas), as well as a security provision requested by the Martinez Unified School District.

The updated proposal would add a new buffer requirement of 1,000 feet from parks, playgrounds, colleges, universities and libraries, as well as expand the current 600-foot buffer from schools (kindergarten through grade 12), daycares and youth centers to 1,000 feet.

As to the reason for the new proposed buffer, the staff report reads:

The recommended changes to the buffer requirements are due in part to feedback from Craig Lazzeretti, the Martinez Unified School District, and the Public Health Institute.

Contra Costa County's health officer, Dr. Ori Tzvieli expressed his support for efforts to shield youths from marijuana exposure, noting the impact it has on the developing brains and connection with anxiety and mental health issues, which have emerged as a major nationwide topic of concern for youths in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tzvieli noted that "all of our surveys" are showing greater use of cannabis products by youths, including 28% of 11th graders reporting marijuana use.

The staff report states that the

# Martinez Wine & Chocolate Stroll

In the spirit of Valentines Day, Downtown Martinez and Company have organized a sweetheart afternoon at the "I (heart) Downtown Martinez Wine & Chocolate Stroll" on Saturday, February 10.



through February 9 and \$50 on the day of event, if not sold out (which it often does).

Redeem your ticket for an event wristband, a wine glass and tasting pass at:

Main Street Plaza 600

Block next to Starbucks. Check-in starts at 12:00 p.m. Tasting starts at 1:00 p.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. Tickets must be redeemed before 3:00 p.m. No beer will be served before 1:00 p.m. or after 4:00 p.m. as per our ABC license.

This is a rain or shine event with no refunds. Participants must be 21+ with valid ID at ticket booth. Please drink responsibly and consider pre-arranging a designated driver or taking Uber or Lyft afterwards.

Proceeds benefit Main Street Martinez (Downtown Martinez & Co.), a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the economic vitality and hometown character of downtown Martinez.

Those who engage in the walk will visit various local businesses and indulge in an exquisite combination of 20+ wines and chocolate treats. Each business will have its own unique offerings, making every stop a delightful surprise.

Tickets for the "I (heart) Downtown Martinez Wine & Chocolate Stroll" are limited and expect to sell out quickly.

What better way than to spend three hours than an afternoon filled with love and laughter and indulging in various tantalizing pairings of wines and chocolates.

Tickets are only available online for \$45



## Save the Date!

March 12, 2024



# State of the City



Featuring Mayor Brianne Zorn

Presented by  
**The Martinez Chamber of Commerce**  
in partnership with the City of Martinez

Creekside Church  
7:00 - 9:00 a.m.  
Breakfast Buffet

# Kiteman of Martinez Goes to India

What's in a name? Last March Tony Jetland, aka Kiteman of Martinez, was invited to a kite festival in Doha, Qatar with all expenses paid. He was invited because of his name which the festival promoter found while searching on the internet.

There he met a member of the India flight team, Mohammed, and became friends. Mohammed was connected to and introduced Jetland to the India Ambassador to Doha. That relationship led to Kiteman being invited to the International Kite Festival – 2024 in Ahmedabad, India, as the lone United States representative among 59 different nations... once again, all expenses paid.

"I was like, holy smokes! I've always heard about other Americans that have gone over to India for these events, and they all come back with amazing stories," Jetland said.

The event also included Indian kite fighting, (like cockfighting only with kites.)

"They made books about it



Tony Jetland, the Kiteman of Martinez is ready to kite fight among the rooftops.



called 'Kite Runner' where the people stand on top of rooftops upon five-story buildings and have kite

to the Ukrainians. "You had this overwhelming feeling of watching world powers get along for two weeks on the kite field. There was no tension. There was camaraderie. It was amazing to see these people from all over the world getting together and flying."

The festival kicked off with a brilliant opening day ceremony of dancing, flag waiving, speeches and other

performances. Each pilot was blessed with a red dot on the forehead as they entered the kite field. Each country were assigned a station in a colorful 10 by 10 easy-up in line with all other countries. Members of the international teams would stop by just to shake his hand and grab a selfie with the "guy from Martinez."

"I felt like I'm some kind of a superstar," Jetland said. The hospitality and the overwhelming outpouring of acceptance and love by the Indian people is like nothing I've ever experienced."

One of the kites Jetland brought was one he custom-made for the event that stated "Kiteman of Martinez" printed on it which he flew in the main arena among all the other international kite pilots.

He gave a brief speech to the generals and admirals and dignitaries introducing

himself as the Kiteman of Martinez representing Martinez, California from the United States of America.

The sky was littered with the brilliant colors of hundreds of kites for the duration of the festival. The Festival involved traveling by bus to two other cities and flying then returning to Ahmedabad for the traditional Indian kite fighting competition.

People stand on flat rooftops in bare feet, running around, trying to cut people's kites out of the sky with what they call a manja line, which is a string line with crushed glass glued into it.

The idea is to wrap your kite line around somebody else's kite line from three blocks away and cut their kite out of the sky. This continues until the last kite flying wins.

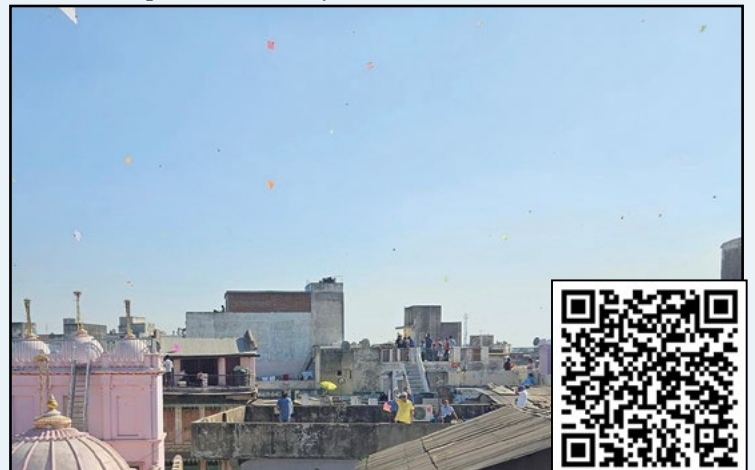
Tony failed at this miserably at this. "I had about 10 kites cut up." These are kites purchased from street vendors especially for the competition. "You buy

a stack of ten or fifteen of them and a few thousand feet of line."

Jetland muses that the entire trip cost him twenty-three dollars and seventy-five cents. That was for his Bart ticket to and from Lafayette to San Francisco. "They took care of us amazingly with hotel accommodations and food and whatever we needed."

As per the country itself he says, "You realize how lucky we are where we live. The infrastructure, water, store, road conditions, living conditions, it really humbles you to realize how people live in other parts of the world. I came home to Martinez with the refrigerator full of food, while these people are going meal to meal."

Who knew when Diablo Gazette first named Tony Jetland the "Kiteman of Martinez" in 2017 that it would lead to such international notoriety. Thanks for representing us, Tony.



For a video of Kite Fighting scan the QR code



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## The Best of Martinez Contest Coming Soon

The Martinez Chamber of Commerce is launching a "Best of Martinez" campaign where residents, businesses, patrons can all vote during an allotted time period for their favorite nominee within various categories.

"We are hoping to launch this in mid-February or early March," said Martinez Chamber President/CEO Lisa Bonnington. "People can vote in various categories ranging anywhere from Best Automotive to Best Hamburger Joint, Best Pizza, and there are all sorts of categories."

People can also suggest categories and also suggest and nominate other businesses. The campaign itself will be ongoing for several weeks. During the voting period, people will be able to go online and see live the top three vote-getters in each category.

Competing businesses would be able to do outreach on their social media platforms and campaign to resident voters, people, and their loyal customers.

"We'd like to do this annually where we can then feature the winners year-round and highlight the "Best of Martinez" in all these different various categories." The goal is to help attract and inform visitors of local favorites

within the city of Martinez when they come for our events or spend a leisurely day or seek quality services.

In addition, The Chamber plans to incorporate the "Citizen of the Year" awards honoring Best Man of the Year, Best Woman of the Year, Best Business of the Year, and others.

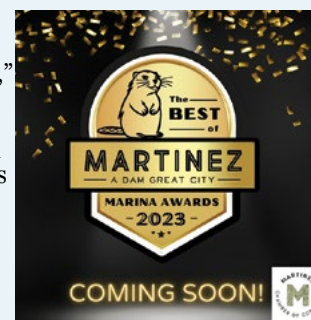
Once voting closes, results will go dark online while officials then verify and screen for voting violations.

"Ultimately, it will culminate with a celebration event called the 'Marina Awards', named after our fair beaver mascot. The plan is for this gala to be like

attending the Academy Awards. It will be an evening event with dinner or very heavy hors d'oeuvres, music, dancing, and of course, the award ceremony where we will reveal the winners in each category."

It is expected that the top three in each category will be extended an invitation while anybody else will be able to purchase tickets.

The voting will be done online at "TheBestofMartinez.com" which is not yet live as of this writing. It should be a world of fun.



# Celebrate the Foods of the Lunar New Year

by Deb Morris, PACIFIC COAST FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

On February 10, 2024, the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Dragon, begins and is celebrated for 14 days. It is a time to welcome longevity, wealth, and to eliminate any negative "chi" or energy.

Food traditions are important to the overall festivities of the Lunar New Year. It is customary to eat jiaozi, (dumplings) at midnight as a symbol of wealth and prosperity in the New Year. The seventh day of the festivities is reserved especially for farmers and is also considered the birthday of mankind. People generally eat noodles on this day to ensure a long life.

Tangerines and oranges are a big part of the celebration and represent happiness and abundance. These are displayed in the home and given as hostess gifts. Giving tangerines whose stems and leaves are intact represents lasting friendship. Giving a whole tree in a pot to display at your front door is even better.

Candied fruit is displayed in homes as a "Tray of Togetherness" and promises a sweet New Year. After enjoying several pieces of candy the adults place red envelopes called lai see in the center of the tray. The lai see contain money and signify luck. Each of the candied fruits has meaning. For example kumquats are for prosperity.

## Other Traditional New Year Foods

Eight Treasures Rice, which is a mixture of rice, fruits and nuts.

Won Ton Soup.

Song Gao, a cake that is made from rice that is ground loosely.

Jiu Niang Tang, sweet wine-rice soup which contains small rice balls.

Mustard greens, often eaten on one of the last days of the celebration to cleanse the body.

Long Noodles, to ensure along life.

Chicken, pork, and spring rolls are also important.

It's not just food that is significant during the Lunar New Year. Flowers play a meaningful role as well. Plum tree buds are bought the day before the New Year and are hoped to blossom on New Year's Day. Chrysanthemums



symbolize longevity while narcissus represents

prosperity and sunflowers mean "have a good year."

Bringing family and friends together on the New Year is also an important aspect of celebration. They help to clear out the bad energy and bring in the good. So gather everyone around you and celebrate good luck and prosperity this year with lucky foods and sweet treats.

## Candied Sour Citrus Peels



4 large oranges, 3 grapefruit, 6 lemons or limes, halved through stem ends

3 cups sugar, divided

8 to 10 tablespoons lemon juice

Tear out flesh from orange halves, careful not to create holes in peels. It is okay if you can't remove all of the pith. Save flesh for another use; cut peels into 1/4 inch strips.

Bring orange peels and 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan and cook 5 minutes. Drain and return peels to pan. Repeat process twice more, using fresh water each time. Return peels to pan; add 2 cups sugar and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil and cook until peels are soft, translucent, and vibrant looking, 30-40 minutes (about 10 minutes longer for grapefruit, or 10 minutes less for lemons or limes).

Drain and transfer peels to a wire rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet; chill until cool, about 15 minutes. Whisk lemon juice and remaining 1 cup sugar in a medium bowl. Add peels; toss to coat. Return to rack; let sit at room temperature 1 hour. Toss peels again in sugar mixture. Return to rack; let sit 4-12 hours to dry out.

Citrus peels can be candied one month ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.



Jennifer Stojanovich  
Realtor, Better Homes Realty

# Real Estate Trends in 2023: A Recap and Insights for 2024

It's interesting to see the dynamics of the real estate market in 2023 and the potential shifts anticipated for 2024. The decline in housing inventory and the fluctuation in mortgage rates certainly played a significant role in shaping the market last year. It is positive to note that experts expect a slightly calmer housing market in 2024, with factors like declining interest rates and improvements in inflation contributing to increased buyer activity.

The Federal Reserve's decision to hold the federal funds rate steady and signal possible rate cuts in 2024 seems to be influencing buyer sentiment positively. The anticipation of more homes hitting the market in the first quarter of 2024 is an encouraging sign

for those looking to buy or sell.



As the year unfolds, it will be intriguing to observe the ebb and flow in both local and national real estate dynamics. The optimism among buyers and sellers, coupled with the potential for a more stable market, sets the stage for an exciting journey in the real estate community. It would be interesting to keep an eye on how these trends develop throughout the year.

Courtesy VirtualResults.net

**BHR**  
Better Homes Realty

**410 Wawona Ln, Clayton**  
Gorgeous "McKinley" Model in Eagle Peak overlooking hills-city-valley & beyond! 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, approx. 2966sf on an approx. .17 acre lot with an attached 3 car garage. Downstairs bedroom & full bath. Fantastic view lot perfect for entertaining offers an expanded deck with trellis covered pergola, spa & RV/Boat parking. Must see!

**735 Terra California Dr, Walnut Creek**  
Rossmoor! Lovely lower level "Sierra" model with only two gentle steps to entrance. Views of western hills! 2 bedrooms, 2 baths approx. 1401sf with a detached garage plus carport! Coming soon!

**1055 Pebble Beach Dr, Clayton**  
Exquisite "Belvedere" Model in Peacock Creek on a Premium Lot Backing to Open Space with Incredible Views! 5 bedrooms plus bonus room/loft/optional 6th bed & den, 3.5 baths, approx. 4076sf on an approx. .26 acre lot with inside laundry & 3 car garage. Outdoor kitchen island, pool/spa & possible RV/boat parking.

**5610 Frank Pl, Clayton**  
Beautifully Maintained Silver Creek Home on a Court Location with Views! 4 bedrooms plus den & attached bonus/Florida room, 3 baths, approx. 2443sf on an approx. .21 acre lot with inside laundry plus 2 car garage & carport. Large side yard for additional parking plus in-ground pool.

**Clayton Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
8034 Kelok Way	\$1,260,000	2843	4/3	12/18/2023
2801 Morgan Territory Rd	\$1,740,000	3350	4/2.5	12/18/2023
5944 Cardinet Dr	\$1,056,000	2272	4/2	12/18/2023
124 Mt Etna Dr	\$940,000	1627	4/2	12/26/2023
5610 Frank Pl	\$1,049,000	2443	4/3	12/26/2023
5909 Herriman Dr	\$1,118,000	2846	4/3	12/29/2023
7016 Molluk Way	\$975,000	1816	3/2	1/4/2024

**Concord Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
5420 Roundtree Ct #A	\$410,000	914	2/1	12/28/2023
1842 Madison Ct	\$925,000	1700	4/2	12/29/2023
1831 Las Ramblas Dr	\$800,000	1657	3/2	1/4/2024
1479 Cape Cod Way	\$695,000	1160	4/2	1/5/2024
3599 Vancouver Way	\$720,000	1026	3/1.5	1/10/2024
4676 N Larwin Ave	\$1,025,000	2167	4/2.5	1/11/2024
1337 Oregon Dr	\$820,000	1319	3/2	1/19/2024

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strike at the heart of **Jameson**, as well as  
Los Angeles... reporter **Devin Parker**...

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# A New Type of New Year's Resolution: What Matters Most

by Dr. James Mittelberger, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer, Center for Elders' Independence

If you are like most people, by February you have already left your New Year's resolutions behind. But if you still want to make 2024 a great year, consider a different approach. Traditional resolutions tend to focus on what you should (or should not) be doing. You tried daily exercising in January, but unless you really care deeply about exercise, the odds are you were not able to sustain it.



matters most to you and then make it the theme for your day-to-day life. If building a strong social circle is what's most important to you, implementing that theme will help you organize your life to create a strong social circle. This strategy will inspire you to do what's necessary, like making phone calls,

responding to text messages, attending that book club, inviting a friend to coffee, or going to the neighborhood BBQ.

Another strategy is to address the Five W's: this will involve scheduling activities and restructuring your time to be consistently successful.

- What am I going to focus on?
- Why is it important to me?
- Who can do it with me or support me?
- Where can I do it?
- When will I do it?

You may also be motivated by writing out your results as if you have already achieved them. Examples: I easily walk and climb stairs with confidence. My friends and I laugh and appreciate each other as we share stories over brunch. Vision boards are also great if you are inspired by photos and other visual cues.

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

### Impacting Health & Well-Being

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

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

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

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

### Ask Yourself Key Questions

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

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

Understanding the why is critical to setting up your life powerfully to make it happen. Creating a meaningful life takes effort, focus and intention.

### Strategies to Have What Matters Most to You

One approach is to discover what



**Neuroplasticity**  
by Jessica Raam Foster,  
NeurologyofPresence.com

# Embrace Your Inner Tarzan

This is a 3-dimensional world. Human beings are designed to live a physical life. We are supposed to get regular doses of multi-planar movement, including eye movements. Being an integral part of a complex environment stimulates movements that are imperative for optimal health and performance.

Many of us are living extremely 2-dimensional lives right now. Not only are we staring at screens for hours on end, but we are also physically sheltered. We do not need to be on high alert about the world around us — nearly everything we need is right in front of us. We literally do not have to reach very far for anything.

This convenience comes at a hefty cost to our health and well-being that goes far beyond your body mass index.

While our lifespans may be longer than our ancestors, in our quest for convenience and safety, we are shutting down parts of our brains. Human beings are supposed to be apex predators- aka total badasses.

Our brains inherently know this, and it finds our mediocre movement skills threatening our survival (even if there isn't a tiger chasing us.)

Our brain knows that we are physically incompetent and could not survive in the wild, and that weakness lingers in our unconscious wiring limiting our ability to perform at the levels we desire.



Yes, we have had a parallel rise in compassion and empathy, an important part of human evolution, but if it comes at the cost of physical strength and agility, it can lead to anxiety, depression, chronic pain, etc.

Don't worry. You do not need to suddenly become a superhero to feel better. Simply getting into nature periodically and looking at the 3-D world around you can make a huge difference in how well you think, move, and feel. But don't be surprised if you suddenly have a desire to swing from some tree branches!

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

Available on Amazon Books & Kindle



**Michael Barrington** 'Your Neighbor's Shoes' [www.www.mbwriter.net](http://www.www.mbwriter.net)

**David George** 'Naked Gardener' [amzn.to/46EQ6sP](http://amzn.to/46EQ6sP)

**William Gensburger** Editorials [www.misterwriter.com](http://www.misterwriter.com)

**Jill Hedgecock** 'BookEnds' & 'For Love of Pets' [www.jillhedgecock.com](http://www.jillhedgecock.com)

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# Wonka

“Wonka” is not a remake of the 1971 classic, “Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory.” This is an origin story and what sets the film apart from most origin stories is that it is based on Gene Wilder’s character in the original film, as opposed to the character in the original book.

It has long been known that the 1971 film deviated from Roald Dahl’s book, “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.” This was rectified with the 2005 adaptation starring Johnny Depp. Although the latter film stayed faithful to the book, many people (me included) find their hearts are with the 1971 movie version.

Wonka shows us the humble beginnings of the young chocolate maker, played expertly by Timothee Chalamet as the bright-eyed and quite naive Willy, hoping to build his chocolate empire.

Chalamet embodies Wonka and makes him a joyous young man who is easy to root for. He is a capable singer but not an amazing one, reminiscent of Gene Wilder in the original. He has fun with the role and is not concerned with coming off as too earnest. He is larger than life without going over the top.

Whenever something beloved is tinkered with, there is always the fear it will not compliment the original. Great care was taken to make this new film in the spirit of the original. The plot is stronger than expected as Willy finds himself in a terrible situation that makes the storyline more complex, providing a valid reason for the new characters to exist. The stakes are high for Willy’s success and viewers will find themselves wondering how all these story threads will be resolved.

The movie answers all the new questions it creates, but audiences



will find themselves seeking answers that link the plot to the original film. Questions about Oompa Loompas and Slugworth may surface and could be resolved in a possible sequel. Also, those familiar with the first film know that Willy Wonka faced some challenges that viewers were never privy to. Those missing gaps of time would be interesting to explore in another film.

There are new songs, but none of them are quite as catchy as the tunes in the first film. At times, young Willy hums “Pure Imagination” and even sings some new lyrics, but I found the original song stuck in my head for days after. This film can also be perceived the same way as it respects what came before it and does not try to compete or replace it. What an enjoyable way to introduce young fans to the classic film without telling them they need to have this new interpretation instead.

Rated PG In Theaters



# Please Don't Destroy: The Treasure of Foggy Mountain

This time of year, audiences are flooded with so called “important films.” Studios like to save their serious films till the end of the year so they will be fresh in the minds of voters for various awards. Although they offer limited runs in New York and Los Angeles to be eligible, the general public usually does not get to see these films until January or February of the new year.

Maybe you have been watching heavy, intense films with running times close to three hours. If you are looking for a palette cleanser, something completely offbeat with the sole purpose of entertaining you for an hour and thirty-two minutes, look no further than “Please Don’t Destroy: The Treasure of Foggy Mountain.”

If you are a current viewer of Saturday Night Live, you are already familiar with this comedy trio. Do not worry though, there is no prerequisite necessary to enjoy this silly and sometimes sweet film.

Ben (Ben Marshall), Martin (Martin Herlihy) and John (John Higgins) are three childhood friends and current roommates who have delayed growing up. They all work at Trout World, a large outdoor store owned by Ben’s father who is hilariously played by Conan O’Brien. Ben would like to run the store one day but does little to prove he would be qualified for such an undertaking. Martin wants to make a serious commitment to his girlfriend, Amy (Nikole Sakur), which makes him realize he needs to be more responsible. As John watches his two best friends embrace adulthood, he fears he will lose them forever and longs for a way for the three to reconnect.

Shortly thereafter, John stumbles onto a social media post about the treasure of Foggy Mountain and decides seeking the



treasure is the perfect way to bring his friends back together. Ben and Martin think the treasure will impress their dad and girlfriend, respectively. So, they go all in on John’s plan. Throw in two female park rangers who are hot on their trail, and adventure, romance and lots of laughs ensue.

The film leans toward the absurd and this type of foul-mouthed humor may not be for everyone. But beneath the jokes is a nice message about finding your purpose in the world and how the relationships we establish as children can be a challenge to maintain as we mature.

Streaming on Peacock Rated R



# Migrations

by Charlotte McConaghy

“Migrations” (Flatiron Books, 2022, paperback, 272 pages, \$13.70) by Charlotte McConaghy is the story of Franny Stone who lives in a dystopian future where most of the world’s birds have become extinct. She risks it all to follow what she believes will be the last migration of Arctic terns across the ocean from Greenland to Antarctica. She convinces Ennis Malone, the captain of a fishing boat named the Saghani, to take her on as a crew member. Malone believes that the terns will reveal the location of fish, a commodity that is also on the cusp of extinction.

Franny is a deeply damaged character with a surprising history — a dark past that is about to catch up with her. Franny is very unpredictable, can be violent, and she is also a sleepwalker, which can be a dangerous condition on a fishing boat.

Two sides of Franny are revealed throughout the novel. Her motivations to follow the terns are juxtaposed against her turbulent Irish childhood

where she grew up without a mother. McConaghy’s talent at creating compelling characters goes beyond Franny. In addition to the quirky members of the fishing boats, readers get to know Franny’s husband, Niall. He is as compulsive as she is and extremely tolerant of Franny’s idiosyncrasies. Niall is a professor who first encounters Franny during an ornithology lecture he is teaching. When she bolts from his classroom, he seeks her out. He eventually discovers Franny works as a janitor at the college and isn’t a student. Niall falls hard for her, and they impulsively get married. Their bond is truly unique and special, because at their core, they care deeply about birds.

“Migrations” was an Instant National Bestseller, an Amazon Editor’s Pick Best Book of the Year in Fiction, a TIME Magazine Best Book of the Year, and the #1 IndieNext Pick for August 2020. Fans of Barbara Kingsolver will enjoy McConaghy’s novels. Her books are bound to

land on the top of my “books to read next” file. I can’t wait to see what she writes next.

Charlotte McConaghy has a master’s degree in Screenwriting from the Australian Film Television and Radio School. “Migrations” was her first novel. Her second novel, “Once There Were Wolves”, is a romantic mystery about a biologist working to reintroduce wolves to the Scottish Highlands. It was an Instant New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Instant Indie Bestseller. It was also a #1 IndieNext Pick and a Book of the Month Club Selection. She lives in Sydney, Australia with her partner and son.

Jill Hedgecock is a local author. Her new release “In Shadow’s Reflection” is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel along with “Between Shadow’s Eyes” (book 1) and “From Shadow’s Perspective” (book 2) are available on amazon.com.



# JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL

by Laura Kindsvater, Save Mt. Diablo

## Save Mount Diablo Expands Its Free Discover Diablo Hikes and Outings Program for 2024

If you like to hike, explore some of the East Bay's premiere hiking and natural areas with Save Mount Diablo in 2024, including places rarely open to the public. The Discover Diablo outings series offers guided hikes, themed walks, and other outdoor activities: mountain biking; rock climbing; trail running; meditation in nature; plein air painting events; and property tours. New this year are two property dedications and a yoga outing at the Curry Canyon Ranch property.

All are free to the public. Trailblazers of all ages and skill levels are welcome to choose appropriate outings from our extensive offerings.

Save Mount Diablo is offering a total of 36 excursions in 2024 to keep up with the consistently growing demand for its outings. We will also be offering rock-climbing outings and mountain-biking events.

Hikes and outings take place at Save Mount Diablo's conserved properties or on park lands in the Diablo Range. These include Mount Diablo State Park, East Bay Regional Park District, Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation,

Contra Costa Water District, Stanislaus County Parks, and National Park Service lands.

Discover Diablo hikes are guided by experts steeped in the natural history and lore of the region, who both educate and entertain while emphasizing the breathtaking beauty that the Diablo Range has to offer.

There is something right for anyone to discover in the nooks and crannies surrounding Mount Diablo and within its sustaining Diablo Range, so be sure to hit the trails in 2024 and find your own individual inspiration!

RSVPs required. To ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to attend, registration for hikes and outings will open one month prior to each hike's date and registration for early outings is already open. Below are the excursions planned for March below.

You can also download and print a flyer of the full year's schedule at: <http://bit.ly/DiscoverDiablo>

RSVP required on Eventbrite. Registration for hikes and other events will open one month prior to each event's date.



### MARCH

#### CONCORD NAVAL WEAPONS STATION HIKE

SATURDAY, MARCH 2ND | TIME TBA

##### Concord Reuse Project

Join us for a unique opportunity to explore the landscape and enjoy the views from the former Concord Naval Weapons Station site.

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

DISTANCE: 4-5 MILES

#### GREEN HILLS, PONDS, AND NEWTS

SUNDAY, MARCH 10TH | 9:30 AM-12 PM

##### East Bay Regional Park District

Join us for a lovely hike at Briones Regional Park.

DIFFICULTY: EASY

DISTANCE: 3 MILES

#### KRANE POND PROPERTY DEDICATION FROM SAVE MOUNT DIABLO'S LOT 25

THURSDAY, MARCH 14TH | 9 AM-12 PM

##### Save Mount Diablo

Please join Save Mount Diablo for our Krane Pond property dedication.

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

DISTANCE: 2 MILES, 400' ELEV.

#### ON BELAY—ROCK CLIMBING

SATURDAY, MARCH 23RD | 7 AM-11 AM

##### Pinnacles National Park

Join us in Pinnacles National Park for some rock climbing!

DIFFICULTY: BEGINNER

DISTANCE: 1 MILE

\*PARK FEE: \$30

#### SPRING BLOOMS OF THE NORTHERN FOOTHILLS

MONDAY, MARCH 25TH | 9 AM-12 PM

##### East Bay Regional Park District

Join us for a wildflower hike at Chaparral Spring.

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

DISTANCE: 3 MILES

#### PERKINS CANYON GEOLOGY AND HISTORY HIKE

SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH | 9:30 AM-12:30 PM

##### Mount Diablo State Park

Join us for a nature adventure on the east side of Mount Diablo.

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

DISTANCE: 3.3 MILES

Local News Items from Other Sources

## In Case You Missed It...

### Mural Wall Partners

Have you seen the new public murals installed around Concord and wondered how your building may be selected for a mural? The below link covers some of the important criteria taken into consideration for eligibility.

Please review before submitting an application to have your wall considered as a Wall Partner of Creative Concord. If you have questions, please contact us. Deadline for submissions is March 15. <https://www.creativeconcordca.com/mural-wall-call>

### White Pony Express Announces Move To Concord by Maggie Fusek, Patch Staff

The Contra Costa nonprofit White Pony Express, has been at its Pleasant Hill site since 2015 but needs a larger facility to serve more people.

White Pony Express, a Contra Costa County-based nonprofit organization that aims to eliminate hunger by recovering fresh, healthy food and delivering it to those in need, has just announced its plans to move to a larger facility.

Since 2015, the organization has been headquartered on Vincent Road in Pleasant Hill but will soon relocate to 2470 Bates Road in Concord. White Pony Express plans to make the move in the first quarter of the year to meet a growing need for its services, according to spokesperson Steve Spraitzar.

Through its Food Rescue Program which operates seven days a week, White Pony Express recovers the equivalent of 8,500 meals each day from over 70 local food outlets. Within 24 hours, volunteers redistribute the nutritious food to nonprofit partners who in turn feed the most vulnerable people in Contra Costa County. [Read more on Patch.com]

### Injured Hiker Rescued From Mount Diablo by Maggie Fusek, Patch Staff

Firefighters drove a specialized all-terrain utility vehicle — UTV— to rescue a woman who slipped and fell on a trail.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District used a specialized all-terrain utility vehicle to rescue an injured hiker from Mount Diablo.

Firefighters from Con Fire's Station 11 in Clayton were dispatched to the downed hiker y, the agency wrote on social media.

An older woman slipped and fell down a trail near Prospector's Gap not far from the mountain's north peak, according to a news report.

Firefighters used the all-terrain utility vehicle —UTV — to rescue the hiker and bring her down off the mountain and on her way to a local hospital for further care. [Read more on Patch.com]

### The Doobie Brothers Concord Concert

June 22 at the Toyota Pavilion features The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame act including Michael McDonald, John McFee, Tom Johnston and Pat Simmons in a not-to-be-missed opportunity to experience the Doobie Brothers.

Tickets for this concert, part of three California tour locations, are available at LiveNation.com and are now on sale.

### Bay Area's Transportation Planning Agency To Put Revenue Measure On Future Ballot from Claycord.com

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Bay Area's regional transportation financing and planning agency, is looking to put a measure on a future ballot that could generate at least \$1 billion per year.

The money would be raised by the MTC using one or more different options, including a sales tax, income tax or payroll tax, among other possibilities.

"Voters traditionally have supported transportation through bridge tolls or sales taxes," said MTC chair and Napa County Supervisor Alfredo Pedroza. "Bridge tolls are not an option in this case and we think it's smart to look at more than a regional sales tax."

Commenters on Claycord.com signal a resounding 'No' vote for this proposal.



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## Concord's Papi Clary's Kitchen Recommended to TikTok Food Critic Keith Lee

When the infamous traveling TikTok food critic, Keith Lee, announced that he was coming to the Bay Area, his followers listed several locations that he should visit. One of the more popular suggestions was Concord's Papi Clary's Kitchen.

Lee has 15.3 million TikTok followers and his food reviews have gained over 630 million likes according to Wikipedia. He travels to cities to review local restaurants, giving preference to Black-owned and family restaurants, small independent eateries who could use support. He frequently has family members place takeout orders on his behalf in order to avoid preferential treatment from restaurant owners.

His reviews follow a consistent formula, where he sits in his car and describes where he got the food, what his experience was ordering the food, how much he paid, and then he rates each item on a scale from one to ten.

Unfortunately, Lee did not review Papi Clary's Kitchen. Instead, he pursued those from Oakland and San Francisco despite the numerous suggestions to Concord.

Nevertheless, it is undeniably a huge endorsement for this small restaurant in Concord to receive such popular support and recommendations.

Papi Clary's own story (which she tells on their Instagram page) is one of hard work and entrepreneurial drive. Chef Clary, Claryzza Abilie, now 24, started to cook in her own backyard in 2019.



Crew inside Papi Clary's Kitchen in Concord.

In 2020, she was in lockdown due to Covid while vacationing in the Philippines.

When she eventually returned, according to her Instagram, she was shut down five times trying to operate her "kitchen" from her backyard.

At that point, she states, "I decided to put on my big boy's pants" and purchased a restaurant located at 2186 Solano Way in Concord.

Papi Clary's Kitchen star continues to rise. Their menu specializes in birria entrees and often sells out. Curious? Give them a try. They also cater providing a variety of party trays.



TikTok Food Critic Keith Lee

## Concord Resident Wins on "Wheel of Fortune"

If you didn't catch "Wheel of Fortune" on Friday, January 26, then you missed Concord's Danny Hauger's valiant second-place finish. Although, he did bring home \$7,300 in prize money.

Hauger, a musician and recording artist, applied online to be a contestant on the game show and as required uploaded a video of himself. In addition to being a performer, his background includes eight years as a teacher, most recently at Heritage High School in Brentwood, California.

"I thought one of my unique appeals was that I teach with a very friendly personality. I thought that would be good for the show. I was a fun, loving, friendly person that people would want to cheer for."

The producers agreed and he received the invitation to screen test.

All the contestants played in a practice run and then the show called those they liked for a date to tape.

Hauger chose to play on December 1.

The hardest part is afterwards. Contestants are forbidden to discuss their show results to anyone until it airs several weeks later.

"I finished in second place. I held the lead for a little bit in the beginning, so I got to feel what it was like to be in first. I got a little mix of everything — a little nerves at the beginning, success solving two puzzles in the middle, and then watching the person (next to me) just absolutely fly by me and destroy the rest of the field."

Hauger also enjoyed speaking with host Pat Sajak and Vanna White.



Carol Kaelson/Wheel of Fortune©/© 2024 Califon Productions, Inc. ARR.

"They were both lovely. I'm Speaking to Pat during commercials, the little banter back and forth was a blast. He complimented me on how good of a teammate I was cheering on my other contestants."

It was a pretty quick but eventful two-night trip.

"I felt really proud to indirectly represent the area." Whether getting groceries, a haircut or oil change, Hauser felt that people were cheering him on. "It just made me feel even more connected to the community."

Sajak also helped plug Hauger's music, much of which is written about this area.

"It felt like a high point in everything I've done so far. Just kind of culminating in one brief moment on national TV. It was great, and I loved it."

## Images of Ruby Live On

Ruby, the Concord Doberman, aka Ruby Dooby Do, had over 1.8 million Tik Tok followers, 1.3 million Facebook followers and over 300,000 on Instagram. She was known worldwide including a mural in Paris, France thanks to her dedicated owner and photographer Charles Lindsay. Even Creative Concord who decorated Concord with several murals considered a mural of Ruby for downtown Concord. However, Ruby passed away in August of 2022 and that notion dissipated.

Yet even today, Ruby is still ever-present.

If you were to shop Tilly's, Nordstrom, Urban Outfitters, and others, you will find T-shirts, hoodies, and sweatshirts with the iconic image of Ruby that started it all.

One such attire is promoting Death Row Records, an independent record label now owned by Snoop Dogg, who was an early follower of Ruby. Another shirt was recently seen being worn by a cast member on SNL in one of its skits. Perhaps Visit Concord should add a version to its Concord swag inventory.



Ruby in her iconic pose. Photo courtesy Charles Lindsay Photography.

Today the Ruby Dooby Do social sites still exist with even a larger following as Lindsays have a new pup, Bruce. Bruce, now nearly two years old, has entered the dog show circuit and



Death Row Records, an independent record label now owned by Snoop Dogg offers a shirt with Ruby's image



SNL cast member, Chloe Fineman, seen in a skit wearing a T-shirt sporting the Ruby image.

has already won Champion status.

So, Concord has that going for it... which is nice.

## Area Students Win Congressional App Challenge for Developing Tools that Support Health and Wellness

Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (CA-10) announced that Sania Bidurukontam of San Ramon is the winner of the 2023 Congressional App Challenge (CAC) for California's 10th Congressional District.

Bidurukontam invented the CogniPro app, which aims to reduce misdiagnoses of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and help mental health professionals properly diagnose ADHD. The app includes a 2D platform game and embedded eye tracking to monitor levels of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention, the most common symptoms of ADHD.

Three students from Dougherty Valley High School placed second place in a four-way tie with Advita Goyal, Aryan Agrawal, Prisha Marpu, and a team of students from Dublin High School. The students were recognized for their SkinScan, WellTeen, Med Track, and Politica AI apps, respectively. SkinScan helps identify and monitor skin conditions, WellTeen helps manage stress and promote mental well-being, and Med Track helps users track their daily medications.



Third place was awarded to Jacob Trentini from Monte Vista High School for his app BreatheFree, which monitors air quality and pollen levels.

"It's such a joy to see students' creativity and talent on display each year during our Congressional App Challenge," said Congressman Mark DeSaulnier in a press release.

The winners were chosen by a panel of judges from the STEM and education fields, all of whom live or work in California's 10th Congressional District. The Congressional App Challenge is a public initiative encouraging young people to learn how to code to inspire creativity and promote interest in STEM education. In the eight years of the CAC, the program has yielded 46,928 applicants across all 50 states.

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