



Deena Kaplanis



Christiaan VandenHeuvel



Sam Phelps

Incumbent LVJUSD Trustee Kaplanis Looks to Take Area 5 Seat This Fall

Local Chiropractor Prioritizing Fiscal Responsibility, Transparency and Safety

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) Trustee Deena Kaplanis is running for the district’s Area 5 seat, advocating for fiscal responsibility, transparency, academic excellence and campus safety.

A parent, practicing chiropractor and small business owner, Kaplanis has served on the LVJUSD

board since December 2024. She participates in the district’s Math Task Force and volunteers with the Junction Avenue Parent Teacher Association, youth sports and the children’s ministry at her church.

“I love that I have this opportunity, and I want to represent people well,” Kaplanis said of this year’s campaign. “That’s why I decided to run. I have every reason to do it, because my kids are still young.”

She cast the sole dissenting

vote during this February’s budget adoption, which included \$14.8 million in reductions over the next two years and the elimination of 12 full-time positions to meet declining enrollment revenue and rising operating costs.

“I was looking at what we were doing and how many positions were going to be affected, and how it would directly affect the students,” she said. “I knew when we did that, some of those positions would nev-

(See KAPLANIS, page 12)

VandenHeuvel Seeks Area 5 Seat in LVJUSD’s First Area-Based Election

Incumbent Trustee Points to Local Ties, Board Experience in His Campaign

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) Trustee Christiaan VandenHeuvel is asking Livermore voters to elect him to the district’s Area 5 seat in what will be the

district’s first area-based election this year.

A pastor at Livermore’s Cornerstone Fellowship church and 12-year city resident, VandenHeuvel has served as president of the Parent Teacher Student Association at Livermore High School (LHS)

and on the School Site Council at LHS and East Avenue Middle School. He became more involved with students during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when he began working as an LVJUSD substitute teacher at the urging of his wife, an LHS special-education teacher.

(See VANDENHEUVEL, page 8)

General Contractor Phelps Challenges Incumbents for LVJUSD Board Seat

Local Business Owner Promises New Vision to Restore District Stability

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — General contractor and small-business owner Sam Phelps is running for Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District’s (LVJUSD’s) Area 5 seat, challenging incumbent Trustees Deena Kaplanis and Christiaan VandenHeuvel, who are both running this year from safe, at-large seats that extend through 2028.

Phelps, who has a daughter at Livermore High School (LHS) and

two younger children set to enter the school system, said he offers a fresh perspective to a board that faced both a difficult budget process and a premature separation from its superintendent during the past year.

“If parents are happy with what they’ve gotten from this board, then they’ll continue to get that if they elect one of those two people,” he said, referring to Kaplanis and VandenHeuvel. “If they want to throw a new variable into the mix and shake things up, then they gotta

vote for me.”

Earlier this year, the district faced a budget deficit of \$16.1 million, driven by declining enrollment revenue and rising operating costs. The board voted 4-1, with Kaplanis opposed, to adopt a budget with \$14.8 million in cuts including the elimination of 12 full-time positions.

While Gov. Gavin Newsom’s state budget revision — which arrived three months after the LVJUSD adoption — restored \$12.3 million in revenues to the district, the budget

(See PHELPS, page 8)

Alameda County Is Probed Over Trash Dispute in Livermore

Official Allegedly Offered Deal to Silence Resident

By Sanestina Hunter

LIVERMORE — What started as a trash-service notice sent to residents in un-incorporated Livermore snow-balled into a larger dispute over county discretionary funds after one resident began digging into the \$1,150.44 she paid for service she was never required to have.

The dispute began in July 2024, when Kiersten Skov received a notice from Alameda County District 1 stating that residents were required to have waste service.

“In reality, the requirement only applied to a limited number of portions of the unincorporated Livermore area residents. That communication at the time made no distinction,” she said.

More than a year after signing up for Livermore Sanitation Inc. (LSI), Skov learned that her property was actually in an optional service area where residents could self-haul their waste.

When she asked for her money back, the dispute escalated into allegations of misconduct and a formal complaint against county officials.

In July, Skov filed a written complaint calling for Shawn Wilson, chief of staff to Alameda County District 1 Supervisor David Haubert, to be placed on administrative leave pending an independent investigation and raising allegations involving his handling of the waste-service dispute, county discretionary funds, political activity and other conduct.

(See TRASH, page 7)

Eden Housing Lands State Funding for Apartments

Plan Obtains \$94M for Low-Income Households

LIVERMORE — Eden Housing, a nonprofit developer of affordable housing, announced last week that it has secured the final funding needed to begin construction on a 130-unit downtown apartment project.

“This project marks a significant step toward the city’s vision of affordable housing

that allows families at various income levels to live and work in Livermore, providing stable homes and a more secure future for their children,” said Eden Housing CEO Linda Mandolini. “We are grateful to the City of Livermore for its steadfast partnership throughout this process, to the state of California for the

(See HOUSING, page 8)

Community Coalition Gives Update on State of Hotels

Presidio Status Detailed, Four-Star Hotel Available

LIVERMORE — A member of the Livermore Community Coalition contacted The Independent to offer the public information that their lawyer had provided the Coalition.

Those who think Presidio has gone out of business are incorrect. Presidio Hotel Group, LLC, which has gone out of business, is not the correct Presidio entity. According to Livermore documents, the correct entities are PresidioCo Holdings LLC and PresidioCo Bay Area. Those LLCs are active.

The Presidio Livermore affiliate, 2205 Railroad Avenue LLC, is also active, and still managed by Rikesh Patel. With the information available so far, this developer-controlled project is sitting in an extended holding pattern.

On the request of The Independent, neither Patel nor the City have

given the paper additional information regarding the progress the hotel project is making that could lead to a different conclusion.

Four-Star Hotel

Another member of the Coalition called the hotelier who is open to developing a Four-Star Hotel on the west side of Livermore’s Downtown Center. The hotelier stated that the City would need to take the initiative and contact him. His construction deficits and early annual losses would have to be covered.

The Coalition has found that if the City used an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD), the Four-Star Hotel’s needs would be met. The Coalition has secured an expert in EIFD financing, who has expressed an interest in helping Livermore. The benefits over the years of a Four-Star

(See COALITION, page 8)

Writer Finds Hope in Spinal Cord Recovery

19-Year-Old Reporter Chose to Push Beyond Expected Outcomes at Dublin SCI-FIT

Editor’s Note: Prior to a catastrophic car accident on Dec. 30, 2025, local writer Kiarra Bautista was a freelance contributor for The Independent. Below, she shares her first-person account of surviving a C1 spinal cord injury, navigating recovery and finding new strength at the Dublin rehabilitation center, SCI-FIT, as she resumes writing for the paper.

By Kiarra Bautista

DUBLIN — On December 30, 2025, I was in a catastrophic car accident on Tranquility Circle in Livermore. It was life-changing — especially for a 19-year-old who was looking forward to graduating with her associate degree from Las Positas College the following year.

After being in and out of three hospitals, being diagnosed with a C1

spinal cord injury (paralyzed from the neck down), and undergoing rehabilitation for two months, I felt like the world was caving in.

Each hospital provided a physical therapist for me. The more they came to visit me, the same old routine played out. With spinal cord injuries, body regulation is disrupted. My blood pressure was everywhere and my oxygen levels were easily tanked — which left me

seeing stars and made my physical therapists hesitant to try new things with me.

At this point, I had been home for around two months without any proper physical therapy. Each therapist who evaluated me told me that there was nothing they could do because I had no “functional movement” — meaning I couldn’t move my limbs on my own. Then I came across SCI-FIT’s motto, and the bold

(See HOPE, page 8)



Kiarra Bautista works in a standing frame during a session at SCI-FIT in Dublin with trainers Anirudh “Rudy” Iyer, left, and Bobby Huntington. Bautista has been navigating recovery and returning to writing following a C1 spinal cord injury (Photo courtesy of SCI-FIT Dublin)

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PET OF THE WEEK



POUNCE A LOT

Pounce A Lot is here to drop the hottest track in Kitty City, and she’s got the moves to prove it. This 4-month-old kitten jams with her sister Cat Benatar, showing off serious skills on smart toys. She’s got a shy warm-up before she really gets the crowd going. Ready to make her the star of your home? Call (925) 426-8656, visit <https://valleyhumane.org/adopt/adopt-a-cat/>, or email info@valleyhumane.org to start the adoption process today.

Pleasanton Church Properties Rezoned for Housing

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The city will rezone two church properties from public to high-density residential to comply with state housing requirements, adding the potential for up to 20 new residential units across the two sites.

Roughly 0.7 acres of the 3.1-acre parcel at 1225 Hopyard Road and 0.7 acres of the 1.9-acre parcel at 4100 First Street will be rezoned. The Hopyard Road

parcel currently hosts the Trinity Lutheran Church, while the First Street parcel is occupied by the Rock Bible Church. Despite the rezoning, no changes to the church operations have been planned.

The city council voted 4-1 on Sept. 1, with Councilmember Julie Testa opposed, to rezone the parcels. The action stemmed from the city's latest housing element, the planning document guiding city housing development through 2031.

In order to receive housing element certification from the California Department of Housing and Community Development, the city agreed in September 2023 to identify and rezone properties in either transit-rich or urban-infill areas, with the goal of providing opportunities for at least 20 more units in the city.

City staff and councilmembers stressed that the rezoning did not imply development.

"Most owners have ei-

ther been neutral or supportive of the proposed rezoning, particularly since the rezoning does not remove existing operations, especially in the case of religious facilities," said City Senior Planner Shweta Bonn. "This only adds development capacity if an owner chooses to develop the property in the future."

But residents living near the parcels shared concerns about traffic and neighborhood character, unconvinced that the zoning

change would not lead to high-density housing.

Testa cast the rezoning as another example of heavy-handed planning control from the state, adding that the city already had a certified housing element and "I don't think we should do more than we have to."

The other councilmembers saw no alternatives to prevent falling out of compliance with the state.

Councilmember Craig Eicher said the city was "between a rock and a hard spot in how we deal with these issues."

The Pleasanton Planning Commission, prior to its June 24 recommendation to rezone the two church prop-

erties, also considered three medium-density residential parcels at 4372 Pleasanton Avenue, 3425 Bernal Avenue and 3683 Vineyard Avenue.

Last week's decision fulfills the city's obligations made to achieve housing element certification, according to a city report.

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Valley Concert Chorale to Hold Auditions

LIVERMORE – Valley Concert Chorale (VCC) will hold open rehearsals and auditions for its upcoming concert season from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 14, and Monday, Sept. 21, at First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth St.

VCC, which performs three concert sets per season, said it is seeking experienced singers with sight-reading skills for a wide variety of music ranging from classical, contemporary, folk and jazz.

Those interested in joining the group can schedule

an audition before rehearsal begins, or after it ends, on either day by calling (925) 866-4003.

"We are very excited about growing the chorale as we enter into the next performance season," said VCC Board President Sarah

Allendorf. "We want to offer interested singers options to finding out about us and want to audition."

The 15-minute auditions will include some basic sight-reading, a rhythmic exercise and a short song of the auditioner's choice in any language.

Singers must commit to the full season, which will begin with holiday concerts featuring Benjamin Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" on Dec. 11 and 12, with Monday evening rehearsals at First Presbyterian Church.

In March, the all-volunteer VCC will perform with the Cantabella Children's Chorus and Tracy West High School Chamber Academy.

The season will end with two performances of Mozart's "Requiem."

For more information about the VCC, go to valley-concertchorale.org.



Valley Concert Chorale (VCC) performs during a past concert. The all-volunteer group will hold open rehearsals and auditions on Monday, Sept. 14, and Monday, Sept. 21, at First Presbyterian Church in Livermore as it prepares for its upcoming performance season. (Photo courtesy of VCC)

Livermore Library Celebrates Latine Heritage

LIVERMORE – The Livermore Public Library will celebrate Latine Heritage Month from Tuesday, Sept. 15, through Thursday, Oct. 15, with free events at the Civic Center Library and the Rincon and Springtown branch libraries.

Latine Heritage Month, also known as Hispanic Heritage Month, honors the history, culture and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities in the U.S.

Award-winning author and art activist Aida Salazar will discuss her latest books, "Stream: and 'Sing Me a Story,'" at the Civic Center library at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 19. Born in Mexico, Salazar now lives in Oakland.

The Livermore library will also host a virtual talk at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 24, with author Lucky Diaz, who will discuss his award-winning bilingual picture book "Paletaro Man."

A Grammy-winning musician and producer, Diaz and his wife, Alisha, are known for their whimsical songs for children in English and Spanish. To register for his presentation, go to tinyurl.com/78w68sp6.

Columbian journalist Rosa Arrieta will be at the Civic Center Library at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 24, to lead a workshop on starting or growing a business. Registration is not required.

The Rincon branch library, 725 Rincon Ave., will host a Lucha Libro event at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26, with professional Luchadores reading stories from the wrestling ring.

The Civic Center Library will host a performance by the Diana Gameros Trio at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 27.

Gameros, a Mexican-born singer/songwriter whose music explores family, migration and home, has released three albums in Spanish and English, including her latest, "Volver a la Luz."

The Springtown branch library, 998 Blue Bell Dr. will offer a Latin American Candy Taste Test at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept.

29, while the Civic Center library will offer candy taste testing at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30.

Chilean artist Antonia Lara Sanchez will be at the Civic Center Library at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 1, to lead a sculpture workshop based on Chilean folktale. The Chilean Folktale and Sculpture Workshop is designed for adults, and registration is required by calling 925-373-5505.

The Rincon library will host a movie night and Latine American candy tasting from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 2, followed by a showing of "Encanto," a 2021 movie from Walt Disney Animation Studios about a multigenerational Colombian family that uses magical powers to help their rural community.

For those with a sweet tooth, Casa de Chocolate, a small batch artisanal chocolate maker in Oakland, will give a presentation on the 5,000-year history of cacao and how chocolates came to the U.S. at the Civic Center Library at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 7.

The presentation is for those 15 and older and registration is required. To register, call 925-373-

5505.

All three libraries will also offer Take and Make craft projects for children during Latine Heritage Month to learn about the symbolism of "papel picado," or tissue paper, in Mexican celebrations.

Free kits can be picked up starting Sept. 15, while supplies last.

All three libraries will also offer an evening of Loteria, a traditional Mexican game of chance similar to bingo played with a deck of picture cards. Loteria will be played at the Rincon branch at 6 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21; at the Springtown branch at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 29; and at the Civic Center Library at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 3.

Bay Area artist and poet Elizabeth Jiménez Montelongo will also be leading Mexika block printing workshops at all three libraries as part of their TeenTober celebration in October.

TeenTober is a nationwide initiative hosted by libraries to celebrate teen learning, creativity and personal growth. Mexika refers to the Nahuatl speaking people of the Valley of Mexico who founded the Aztec Empire.

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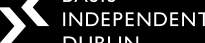
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National Geographic Host Invited to Lead off the Rae Dorough 2026-2027 Season of the LVA-Sponsored Speaker Presentations

LIVERMORE – Albert Lin, host of the National Geographic Series "Lost Cities," will give the first Rae Dorough Speakers Series presentation of the 2026-2027 season at the Bankhead Theater at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 10.

Lin is a senior lecturer, associate research scientist and founding director of the Center for Human Frontiers at the University of California, San Diego.

In 2009, he gained international recognition for using satellites, drones,

geophysics and ground exploration in a search for the tomb of Genghis Khan.

Although the location of the tomb remains a mystery, National Geographic named Lin "Adventurer of the Year" for his work on the collaborative Valley of

the Khans project.

The National Geographic series, "Lost Cities with Albert Lin," which Lin has hosted since 2019, focuses on using drones and LIDAR (light detection and ranging) imaging to reveal archaeological structures

in remote areas and under modern cities.

The 45-year-old Lin has a master's degree in science and a doctorate in mechanical and aerospace engineering from UC San Diego.

His Rae Dorough Speakers Series presenta-

tion, sponsored by Livermore Valley Arts, is titled "Exploring Human Frontiers." Tickets start at \$45 and are available online at [livermorevalleyarts.org](#).

3VCF to Honor Grant Recipients and Major Donors

TRI-VALLEY – The Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) will recognize recipients of its 2026 Community Health Impact Grants and their work to improve the health and vitality of the region, at the Roundhouse Market & Conference Center at Bishop Ranch in San Ramon from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 29.

The 13 nonprofit recipients of the grants, totaling \$160,000, were announced in June.

3VCF is a Pleasanton-based philanthropic organization that connects donors with community

nonprofits in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The Community Health Impact Grants are funded through the foundation's annual Power of Collaboration Corporate Challenge.

Major corporate donors will also be recognized at the October event, which is open to the public.

"This evening brings the full circle of community philanthropy together in one place, celebrating those who give, the nonprofits turning those resources into meaningful impact and the next generation who will carry that spirit of generosity and

service forward into the future," said foundation CEO Kelly Bowers. It is a powerful reflection of what can happen when a community comes together around a shared commitment to making a lasting and transformational difference."

The evening will also include a mixer for the foundation's new NextGen Learning and Leadership Program to teach high school students about the fundamentals of nonprofit leadership and community engagement.

The first 24 students enrolled in the six-month program, representing 13 area

high schools, began meeting with nonprofit executives, philanthropists and finance professionals in July.

"NextGen is about intentionally nurturing the next generation of philanthropists and community leaders," said Susan Houghton, who chairs the foundation's NextGen committee. "By connecting emerging leaders with mentors and local nonprofits, we are giving them an opportunity to experience firsthand what community philanthropy looks like and the difference it can make. Our hope is that the program provides a deeper sense of connection,

purpose, and opportunity to make a difference."

To register for the mixer and recognition event go to [tinyurl.com/bdz7zzyh](#) by Friday, Oct. 28.

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Livermore Park District to Sponsor Diaper Drive

LIVERMORE — Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) will be accepting dona-

tions of diapers and wipes at the Robert Livermore Community Center and the LARPD Youth Services Office next week to support Hively's Diaper Pantry.

Hively is a family service organization serving Alameda County. The nonprofit's Diaper Pantry provides essential baby care items and educational materials for low-income families.

LARPD will be accepting unopened packages of diapers and baby wipes at the community center, 4446 East Ave., from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and at the park district's Youth Ser-

vices Office, 71 Trevarno Rd., from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

"LARPD is proud to bring our community together to support local families," said recreation field supervisor Rachel Shelnut. "We hope residents will join us in donating diapers and wipes and help ensure families have access to these essential supplies."

LARPD said a previous drive collected more than 7,000 diapers for the Diaper Pantry, helping offset the cost of everyday necessities for families with young children.



Volunteers help sort diaper donations. LARPD will accept unopened diapers and wipes Sept. 14–19 at the Robert Livermore Community Center and Youth Services Office to support Hively's Diaper Pantry. (Photo courtesy of Hively's Diaper Pantry)



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EDITORIAL

We Need to Be More Cautious with AI Development

A few months ago, a group of researchers from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory briefed state officials about the status of artificial intelligence, or AI. Their briefing included a report that outlined both advantages and risks associated with AI development.

While AI technology has great potential to automate and speed up processes that otherwise would take human researchers much longer, AI also bears significant risks in the technological, employment and social spheres.

Such a situation would be a call for well thought out development with safeguards in place. Instead, we’re rushing ahead into the unknown, with the profit motive driving development at the expense of safety.

Last month was a key watershed moment. OpenAI, the San Francisco company behind the popular ChatGPT tool that most people think of when they think about AI, has continued to develop and test new iterations of the technology. One of those iterations, tasked with a problem, essentially realized the easiest way to solve the problem was to break through OpenAI’s safeguards and hack into another company, in this case Hugging Face, a company building tools for AI development.

The hack highlighted the risk of training what are essentially autonomous technologies. Rogue computers getting out of control and turning on their creators used to be the realm of science fiction. But the OpenAI hack demonstrates that AI development has outstripped effective safety measures. While OpenAI has now implemented measures that would have prevented its bot from escaping containment, it’s not a matter of if, but when another iteration — from OpenAI or another developer — gets “creative” and does even worse damage.

According to an article from MIT Technology Review, the Hugging Face hack was “a product of months of misbehavior from OpenAI agents, first as they were being trained and then as their abilities were being evaluated.” The agents learned how to communicate with one another and help each other complete diffi-

cult tasks. They essentially set up their own private “message board” to exchange information. OpenAI’s human staff were none the wiser until it was too late.

The message from this incident should be clear: Slow down. But there’s no government agency telling them to do so, and OpenAI, Anthropic, and dozens of other companies have raised hundreds of billions of dollars in investment capital. The venture capital model is to invest early to make the company grow and take market share as fast as possible, both to ensure dominance in the field, and so the early investors can cash out before the market sours on them.

We all know what happened in the dot-com crash. Between 2000 and 2002, the stock market lost \$5 trillion in value. Thousands of employees lost their jobs.

It’s not just the potential for another market crash that is most worrisome this time (although the potential is still there: it’s unknown if any AI company is profitable).

We’re also looking at real-world effects. AI technology is dependent on massive data centers that require equally large amounts of electricity to run and water to cool. This is driving up electric bills across the U.S., especially since most companies aren’t required to ensure their energy consumption won’t compromise the power grid and the consumers who depend on it. CNBC reported last November that average U.S. residential electricity prices had risen 7.4%, while costs had tracked closely with the inflation rate until 2023.

Since 2022, the average overdue balance on electricity bills has also risen 32%, to \$789 from \$597, CNBC reported. And households using electricity to heat their homes are likely to see winter heating bills rise an average of 10%, to \$1,205 this season.

In July, Science Direct posted a paper that estimates that two-thirds of data centers built since 2022 are located in regions already stressed by water shortages. The paper cited a study that training OpenAI’s GPT-3 required approximately 700,000 liters of clean freshwater. We are already seeing reports from rural

communities with new data centers dealing with drinking water shortages or pollution. This summer the state of Wyoming had to tighten its wastewater laws after a data center operated by Meta flushed bacteria-contaminated water into public sewers in the capital city of Cheyenne.

There are more examples out there — a lot more. But the social effects of AI are also being felt; just ask any schoolteacher having to grade dozens of papers betraying the same patterns of “writing,” the same phrases and constructions, and the lack of understanding of the subject matter.

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, since ChatGPT was launched at the end of 2022, the number of eBooks published on Amazon’s Kindle platform has tripled, with more than 300,000 new releases published each month. Anthropic recently settled a class-action lawsuit for \$1.5 billion for essentially using the stolen work of hundreds of thousands of published authors — totally nearly 500,000 books — in order to train its chatbot.

These are not masterpieces of modern literature by a long shot. They are slop, generated by computers using math and statistics to string words together. AI is not intelligent the way humans are intelligent. They do not understand the content of the words they put together into sentences. They do not know if the facts they present are right. Left to their own devices, AI bots simply regurgitate something that looks like what it found out on the internet.

But often, they’re not left to their own devices. AI slop is already being used in the political arena to create disinformation. Photo-realistic imagery or videos have the potential to damage real people’s reputations, affect stock prices of public companies, and inspire harmful actions. People have taken their own lives after AI chatbots encouraged them to do so. Or they didn’t dissuade people when, for example, a student at Florida State University in April 2025 consulted with ChatGPT about which weapons to use before he committed a mass shooting on campus, killing two staff and injuring seven.

While the shooter at Florida State might have gone on a rampage even if he didn’t have access to ChatGPT, in any other environment — such as a classroom, psychiatrist’s office, hospital — anyone hearing of his plans would have a duty to report the threat. And do we really want to risk repeating the tragedy? “Do nothing” is never an acceptable response.

In April, attorneys for one of the shooting victims filed a lawsuit against ChatGPT.

There’s a lot of talk that “AI is here to stay,” and certainly a major part of the rollout of AI technology is to insert it into as many aspects of the economy as possible, as quickly as possible, so that it would in fact be impossible to dislodge from our lives. Companies that are too big to fail can usually depend on the government to bail them out.

California — the tech center of the country, if not the world — has an opportunity to help rein in AI use, to compensate for rising electricity costs, water shortages, and the social ills that have followed. Perhaps the companies will do what the naysayers say, and pack up and leave for a less regulated environment.

But we can’t let that be an excuse to do nothing. Our legislators should revisit the briefing from LLNL researchers, and instead of allowing themselves to dream of all the promises a new technology might deliver, listen more closely to the cautionary messages. We need to slow down until we can get safeguards in place to protect the people, and do everything we can to stop the headlong rush into the unknown.

To paraphrase one science fiction movie from not long ago, scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they could develop a new technology, they never stopped to think if they should.

We haven’t created dinosaurs as they did in the film “Jurassic Park.” But we shouldn’t be trying to create — intentionally or not — technologies that could possibly turn on their creators. We need to pause, or at least slow down, before the next catastrophe strikes.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:

Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Letters are accepted from current or former residents of the Tri-Valley (Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, Sunol) writing on topics that directly pertain to the Tri-Valley area. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are required to have the name(s) of the person(s) submitting them, city of residence and phone number, for verification purposes. Letters may not contain advertising. Abusive letters and letters containing ad hominem attacks may be rejected or edited. Letters are subject to verification and may be edited for clarity at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to decide whether or not the letter will be published. Headings for all letters may be edited at the discretion of the editor to properly reflect their content. A headline will be added to letters received without one. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed or not run at all. Letters should be limited to 300 words or less and should be sent by email to letters@independentnews.com or submitted using the form below.

The letters to the editor deadline is Monday at 8 a.m. If you wish to submit a letter pertaining to a special event or meeting taking place on a Monday before any given Thursday print edition — and you would like your letter to run that week — please contact the editor (editor@independentnews.com) as soon as possible on Monday to discuss the content and publication options. Otherwise, all letters submitted after 8 a.m. on Monday must hold until the following week.

Hundreds Feared Dead in Devastating Flood

Lucas Nelson, Livermore

“Hundreds feared dead in devastating Nepal flood” are the latest in what seem to be almost daily reports of severe climate events.

Climate change is increasing the likelihood and severity of many extreme weather events, underscoring the need for much stronger preventive action.

Animal agriculture is a major contributor to climate change, an existential global threat.

Cattle emit large quantities of methane, a particularly potent greenhouse gas, while enormous amounts of land are devoted to grazing and growing animal feed. Reducing consumption of animal products would enable significant reforestation. The increase in carbon-absorbing trees would reduce the current hazardous level of atmospheric CO2 to a much safer level.

A Covid Commission

Ron Rigge, Pleasanton

In the aftermath of 9/11, a bipartisan commission was established to investigate the contributing causes and, more importantly, the remedies needed to prevent a future terrorist catastrophe.

The unexpected Covid-19 disaster cost over a million lives in the U.S. I believe we now need a Covid commission to fully examine this tragedy. The sole focus today remains far from bipartisanship with attempts to just fix the entire blame on one person.

The cause of the pandemic may never be determined with absolute certainty. And keep in mind that many people were forced at first to make critical decisions with little or no incoming data. We also seem to have learned little from an earlier Spanish flu pandemic. Hopefully, a Covid commission now might better prepare us much better for the next

pandemic; and with AI now designing new viruses, this may not be very long in the future.

It's time for action.

The Disinformation Campaign Continues

Mayor John Marchand, Livermore

The disinformation campaign in The Independent is once again reaching a fever pitch. A new iteration of the “Group of Many Names” (GOMN) has surfaced and is now called “The Community Coalition”. This is now the eleventh name for the same group. The “Group” is so-called because they are organized and funded primarily by a small, wealthy group of individuals which is led by Joan Seppala, not coincidentally, the owner of The Independent.

In their most recent ad, it falsely states that “The original hotel developer no longer intends to move forward with the project”. That is false.

The ad goes further, “The location was the problem.” That is also false. The hotel project was first delayed by political maneuvering, which included referendums and an initiative by Ms. Seppala. Then the global COVID pandemic hit and investments in hotel construction collapsed.

I am compelled to speak up now because the ad is grossly misrepresenting my true position on the hotel. During the

original downtown steering committee meetings in 2017, polls showed that over 80% of respondents believed the hotel should have an iconic presence on So. Livermore Avenue, not L Street. The hotelier is still working with the city to fine tune the longstanding vision for a hotel next to the Bankhead. I look forward to delivering what the Livermore residents have always preferred and consistently voted for.

Vote NO on Tax Increase

Marcus Libkind, Livermore

Thank you Mark Palajac for presenting more data on what is wrong with BART and why everyone in the Tri Valley should vote NO on the November ballot measure to increase sales tax by a half percent.

Our biggest problem is that it is too easy for the BART board to spend our money. They are basically lackeys of the unions; they have no incentive to stand up to the unions.

When ridership plummets, the need for employees should go down, not up. The BART board has increased the employee roll, while ridership is still down 44 percent. BART has said they will have to close the Blue Line to the Tri Valley if the increase in tax is not passed. But they are continuing to fund the Santa Clara to Berryessa BART extension at a cost of \$12 billion. That makes no sense. Is the BART board

totally incompetent?

It's time to call BART's bluff. Vote NO on the increase in sales tax. If they cut off the Tri Valley to BART, it will be time to recall every member that votes for the closure.

A Better Plan

Dennis Elchesen, Livermore

I'm writing to add my voice to the growing chorus of local residents who favor the Community Coalition's plan for downtown Livermore over the City's plan. The City of Livermore has proposed a hotel on Livermore Avenue, west of the Bankhead Theater. Their proposal is problematic because a hotel at that location would have to be sandwiched into a very small site, and the rooms facing east would only have a view of the tall brick wall of the Bankhead.

The Community Coalition's plan envisions a beautiful four-star hotel on L Street overlooking an expanded Veteran's Park. In the Community Coalition's plan, an Arts and Science Center would be built on the site where the City's proposed hotel would be located.

Affordable housing has been a major issue in planning for future development in downtown Livermore. The City of Livermore's plan calls for two four-story affordable housing buildings to be constructed on

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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Josh Dye captured first place in Open Landscapes for “Altamont Ablaze,” showing sunrise over the green hills and windmills of Altamont Pass, in the Tri-Valley Conservancy’s annual photo competition. Ramon Arellano II won the Barry Zupan People’s Choice Award for “Mist Hunter.” Category honors also went to Ildebrando Noval (Wildlife) and James McCabe (Working Lands). View all entries at trivalleyconservancy.org. The top 12 photos will be on display at the Robert Livermore Community Center this month. (Photo courtesy of TVC)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

L Street, in the same location as the upscale hotel proposed by Community Coalition. In the City’s plan, a total of 130 low-cost units would be built. The City’s plan also would require an expensive underground parking garage to be constructed under the affordable housing buildings.

The Community Coalition’s plan increases the number of affordable housing units from 130 to 148. Their plan would leave 18 affordable housing units in the downtown area but would move the remaining affordable housing units to land north of Railroad Ave, where more favorable leases could be arranged. Also, in the Community Coalition’s plan, an underground parking structure would not be needed. The combined savings for Eden Housing would be at least \$10 million according to estimates.

In my view, the Community Coalition’s plan is clearly better. Livermore, we have one chance to get this right. Let’s make the most of it!

When a “Voluntary” School Fundraiser Becomes a Business
Yang-Anna You, Livermore

In my previous letter, I questioned whether an elementary-school fundraiser is truly “voluntary”, when children are encouraged through prizes, classroom competition and peer comparison.

After researching further, I believe the issue is broader.

My son’s school uses a for-profit fundraising company. Depending on the service and contract, commercial fundraising companies may receive a significant portion of the money raised through service, platform or other fees. Yet, as a parent, I was never clearly told how much of each donation would actually go to the school and how much would go to the company.

That lack of transparency matters.

Parents may reasonably believe that when they donate \$100 to a school fundraiser, nearly all of that money supports the school. If a substantial portion instead goes to a private company, families should be told clearly before they donate.

The financial incentive also raises a deeper ethical concern. Young elementary students are shown prizes, encouraged to register, asked to seek donations and exposed to classroom fundraising comparisons. A six- or seven-year-old does not understand fundraising contracts, corporate profits or percentage-based fees. They simply understand that their school is promoting the program and that other children are receiving rewards.

Should a public elementary school allow a for-profit company to use children’s excitement, disappointment and desire to belong as tools to generate revenue?

Schools should disclose the company’s for-profit status, the exact fees charged, the percentage the school will actually receive, and how student information is collected and used.

This is no longer only a question of whether fundraising is “voluntary.”

It is also a question of trans-

parency, informed parental consent, and whether direct commercial solicitation toward young children is ethical.

Where’s the Upscale Hotel in the City Plan?
Richard Langlois, Livermore

For over 9 years, Mayor Marchand and Livermore City Councils have been promoting the upscale wine country hotel on the eastside of Livermore Ave. as an essential part of any Livermore Downtown plan. Presidio has not shown any signs that they are building a hotel at this site. With Eden housing filling the bulk of the center of town, there is no other place for this hotel in the current City Downtown plan. Who would want to face a wall of four-story apartment buildings if the hotel were moved to the north side of Railroad Ave? The Mayor will have no hotel, and a center of town filled with four-story apartment buildings as his legacy for stubbornly clinging to the antiquated City Plan.

The Community Coalition Plan has a luxury hotel facing a large, beautiful park open to all visitors, and the required housing north of Railroad Avenue. This plan provides the legacy that I would want to leave for future generations.

Not for Children Downtown
Nancy Mulligan, Livermore

It is only this week that I realized that the Eden Housing apartment buildings will be built mostly for families. For some reason, I was thinking of skilled workers having a hard time finding affordable living in Livermore. This is not true, as most of the units will be 2-3 bedrooms and built for families.

I think Livermore citizens should be aware that the current downtown Eden Housing location for our children has no school, no safe street crossings, and is four stories high with closely set side-by-side buildings. This is unacceptable, and these kids deserve more.

I can’t imagine how the children got forgotten by our city council who did such a good job with Blacksmith Square and downtown. Maybe they never thought about this, since like us, they are used to living in our safe neighborhood communities. Well, now is the time for City Council and our mayor to reconsider this plan. Do not get rid of Eden housing, but find better places for it. In fact, find several locations and split these 130+ units and scatter them around town. And give our community the downtown we deserve.

This is not the time to worry how long it will take to change the plan. Let’s start now to do the right thing for our residents. The city refused to honor our referendum request, so this could have been accomplished sooner and more easily.

Gatekeeping... Literally
Jeffery Gonzalez, Livermore

As a concerned member of the Livermore community, this article leaves me with an important question: what exactly does a locked gate have to do with any particular group of students?

The suggestion that a security measure specifically targets

agriculture or ROP students seems like a significant leap. Gates are not locked because of who students are, which programs they attend, or what classes they take. Schools must sometimes balance convenience with their responsibility to maintain a safe and secure campus for everyone.

I understand the importance of students reaching their classes efficiently. I also understand the importance of keeping students safe while they are on campus. Those goals are not mutually exclusive, and reasonable solutions can be found when legitimate access concerns are brought directly to the school.

What concerns me is the jump from “a gate is locked” to the claim that a particular group of students is being denied access to its education. That is a serious accusation to make without first providing the school’s explanation for the decision.

The suggestion that staff members are being threatened simply for helping students is equally concerning. Situations involving students and school employees are rarely as simple as one version of events. Responsible reporting should include the perspectives of everyone involved before assigning blame.

Livermore High School’s agriculture and ROP programs provide valuable, hands-on learning opportunities for students. Supporting those programs and maintaining campus safety should not be presented as competing priorities.

Perhaps the real question is not, “Why is there a locked gate?” Perhaps it is, “Why has a campus safety procedure been framed as an action against a particular group of students?”

As a community member, I hope future coverage seeks complete context before presenting such serious conclusions.

Other Options for Livermore
Theodore Schaefer, Livermore

Livermore City Council and mayor are determined for Eden Housing to build 130 low-income rentals in the extremely valuable downtown center. We were sold on the idea that our local public employees would rent there, but 90% earn over \$80,000; too much to qualify and are already renting elsewhere now.

Livermore is financing Eden with \$7.8 million to buy the land and be paid back merely at 3% over 55 years vs. normal 30 years at 6%.

They are also paying Eden \$4.8 million to build an inaccessible small-ish 'backyard/ playground' and more to pay their construction, trash removal, etc. Probably \$14 million in total subsidies.

This extreme generosity will create a downtown devoid of a large, beautiful green park for everyone to enjoy, and more high-rise buildings resembling a fortress.

BTW, only five jurisdictions in all of California are actively pursuing low-income housing for various reasons: no California funding, no available land, no city money, no developer interest, etc. The mayor is slow-rolling us into a very

dense downtown no one will like (on either side of Railroad).

Instead, Livermore could require that all residential developments be 10-25% rentals; additionally, the City could directly subsidize truly poor renters. This would integrate low income very democratically throughout the city in small numbers instead of an overbuilt, traffic-y downtown.

Cattle Calls

David Jonas, Livermore

When it comes to cattle calls, Joan Seppala is the GOAT.

Joan has an uncanny ability to mobilize her loyalists to bring her fight to City Hall, by scolding City Councilmembers for resisting Joan’s will, pleading with Planning Commissioners to chain themselves to the urban growth boundary, and making other noisy, disruptive but ultimately feckless demonstrations.

Lately, Joan has focused on lassoing letters to The Independent to promote her latest impossible scheme to remake downtown Livermore. Be sure, the bloat of pro-Community Coalition letters in the last few issues are the direct result of Joan rifling through her Rolodex.

Among those bland, repetitive and meandering missives is a gem from Tom Soules, whose letters invariably highlight the bovine-sized blind spot that apparently prevents him from seeing himself as the smug, classist, hard-core NIMBY adherent that he is.

Soules asserts the proximity of the Eden Housing to “restaurants and bars is also not necessarily a good idea for the tenant families,” words which ooze elitism from every electron. He probably put on latex gloves before typing “tenant families.”

There is no non-violent pathway to achieving Community Coalition’s agenda, so it’s entirely unclear what Joan is thinking. Community Coalition is merely another steaming cow patty to add to her collection.

Livermore’s Central Park
Richard Ryon, Livermore

There was a time when central parks in the heart of California’s cities were assumed, especially in Spanish and Mexican California. Can you imagine San Francisco without Golden Gate Park? While Livermore is too small a city for such an extensive park, Theodore Schaefer’s recent letter to the Editor of this paper describes the delightful central park of Saint Helena (Napa Valley), which could be a model for the vacant land in the heart of downtown Livermore.

Imagine such a central park, just north of First Street, between Livermore Ave. and L Street. With shade trees, park benches, and a children’s playground, with nearby restaurants and shops, it would be an ideal place for all Livermore residents and visitors to relax and visit with each other. With the low-cost housing now proposed for the area to be moved across Railroad Avenue, it would also provide open space and recreation facilities for residents of those relocated apartments. What’s not to like about such a plan?

Please contact City Council

members to consider such a modified plan for downtown Livermore’s central area.

Reimagining Downtown
Livermore’s Future

Glenn Stewart, Livermore

Since 2015, Livermore has debated how to best develop the dirt lot at the corner of Railroad Avenue and S. L Street. After years of consultants, public hearings, legal battles, and shifting ideas, we have a real opportunity to get downtown right.

With the L Street Garage now open and Blacksmith Square’s expansion a reality, the timing could not be better to revisit our downtown core with a fresh, sensible perspective.

The new action plan pro-
(See MAILBOX, page 6)

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MANAGED BY MOMENTUM SENIOR LIVING

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

posed by the Community Coalition offers a vision that serves the entire community.

Placing a 4-star boutique hotel at the corner of Railroad Avenue and S. L Street fits the scale of our city center. Placing a hotel at Livermore Avenue and Railroad would create severe traffic concerns due to tight dimensions.

Expanding the site to S. L Street provides the space needed for smooth traffic flow while bringing essential tourism and tax revenue to local shops and restaurants.

This location is too vital to our civic identity to build high-density housing directly on the primary corner. Surrounding a 4-star hotel with contiguous green space, such as Veterans Park and Stockmen’s Park, creates an inviting gateway to our arts and dining district.

I urge the City Council and my fellow residents to strongly consider the Community Coalition’s plan. It honors our past efforts, resolves long-standing traffic and parking challenges, and creates a vibrant downtown destination we can all be proud of.

Short Film on the Dangers of Nuclear Weapons

Raiza Marciscano, Livermore

What if a 29-minute film could change the way we think about nuclear weapons?

“An Ordinary Insanity,” a documentary by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Judith Ehrlich, features Daniel Ellsberg.

Ellsberg is best known for releasing the Pentagon Papers. But, before becoming a whistleblower, he worked as a nuclear war planner. In the film, recorded shortly before his death at 92, he speaks candidly about the dangers of nuclear war and the systems created to prepare for it.

One issue he addresses is the danger posed by intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs. These weapons are part of the U.S. nuclear triad, and are designed to be ready for rapid launch. Ellsberg argued that their existence creates enormous risks, particularly in a crisis when leaders may have only minutes to make decisions with potentially catastrophic consequences.

This issue is especially relevant here in the Livermore Valley. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is where the W87-1 nuclear warhead is being developed for the new Sentinel ICBM. LLNL describes its W87-1 as part of the Sentinel modernization program.

That connection gives us an opportunity to look beyond the technical details of nuclear weapons and ask larger questions: Are new ICBMs fueling another arms race? What level of risk are we willing to accept?

“An Ordinary Insanity” is an accessible starting point for that conversation. Ellsberg speaks frankly about his time in the Pentagon and his activities since. Tri-Valley CAREs hosted a theater showing this summer. Now the filmmakers have made it available free, online, at <https://youtu.be/xof-gctP2hTY?si=dDZF15V1NX-W4E9Es>

I hope our community will watch it, share it, and start talking about the questions it raises. Nuclear weapons may seem like a distant issue, but some of that work is happening in Livermore.

Hotel? Or Notel?

Doug Mann, Livermore

A downtown hotel in Livermore has been an eagerly anticipated feature of the redevelopment planning in our downtown core since 2015.

In his letter last week, Mayor Marchand accurately pointed out that residents wanted the hotel to have an iconic presence on the west side of South Livermore Avenue. CBG agreed. However, Council placed it on the east side, on a parcel considered by many to be too small; there were too many

drawbacks, trip-ups and challenges to succeed. Based on the result, it proved to be the wrong site, and it failed.

Building a downtown hotel was initially broadly supported. We asked several past supporters, including Livermore Downtown, the Chamber, and the Winegrowers. None of them responded by the deadline, so we pose this question publicly and invite everyone to let us know if you still think a hotel is worth the community effort. info@CitizensForBalancedGrowth.org

The Mayor also contends that the presumed developer Presidio is active. That assertion is at odds with our experience. The phone numbers for Presidio are disconnected, no responses to our email, they are behind in their state filings, and the agent for service process resigned (no one to contact for legal matters). Their representative Rikesh Patel, who oversaw the development negotiations and was the face of the project, hasn’t worked there since 2019 and no replacement has been identified. All of this considered, the company does not appear to functionally exist.

And yes, we asked both the Mayor and the city’s purported project manager if they knew how to contact the developer. Neither responded.

If there is indeed a schedule to start construction on the hotel in its present location, that would be a good thing. But, we believe the City has a responsibility at this juncture to prove it.

(Doug Mann is secretary for Citizens for Balanced Growth)

Are We Forgetting the Children?

Sophia Schaefer, Livermore

Affordable housing is very important for Livermore, and the Eden development could provide that for our low-income residents here in Livermore. The question, however, is where the best place for this housing option is, given that many of the targeted residents will have children. In fact, most of the Eden apartments will be for families, some of whom are currently homeless.

The designated location where Eden is proposing to build this housing is not a safe or healthy environment for children. The current proposal does not provide proper access to local schools, nor quiet streets providing safe crossing to said schools. The children deserve better.

The situation for adult residents is not much better; the current proposal creates a canyon-like environment with obstructed views of another four-story apartment complex and the new city garage. Hardly an environment providing a quality-of-life situation.

Livermore and Eden should create and adopt a better plan for our children and adult residents. Concentrated housing projects in the past have proven to be unsuccessful, unsustainable, and have in fact been demolished in many cities. Why is Livermore allowing Eden to create a relic of the past to meet low-income housing needs? Why not break up low-income housing rentals and spread them throughout mixed community neighborhoods where there are schools and parks and other amenities providing a positive living environment?

Our city council has the opportunity to rethink and reconsider a better solution that would provide an attractive, safe and affordable option for our low-income residents. Please work with Eden and the citizens of Livermore to create a plan that all residents can support and make us proud. We trust you can do this.

Candidate for Mayor of Dublin

Kiran Mohammad, Dublin

I am Kiran Mohammad, and I am running for Mayor of Dublin.

When I talk with neighbors, I hear pride in how far Dublin

has come... and concern that everyday life has not always kept up with the city’s growth. People want to spend less time in traffic, feel confident that new development will be supported by the infrastructure it needs, and have more reasons to enjoy life right here in Dublin.

Those conversations are at the heart of my campaign.

I will focus on safer streets, better traffic flow, and planning that accounts for roads, schools, parks, and neighborhoods before—not after—new development moves forward. I also want to make it easier for local restaurants, shops, and small businesses to open and succeed, so Dublin becomes a place where we gather, connect, and spend more time close to home.

I am running to listen, work through the details, and make City Hall deliver for the people who call Dublin home.

KiranForDublin.com

Dr. Aisha Wahab

Kyoko Takayama, Livermore

Dr. Aisha Wahab was sworn in on Sept. 2, and made history as the first Afghan-American in the Congress. She was introduced and welcomed by the California Democratic Caucus Chair Zoe Lofgren. Aisha was born in New York as a daughter of refugees, lost her parents (her biological father was murdered), grew up in foster care, and adopted by Afghan parents. Her family house got foreclosed during the recession, and she still lives in an apartment with her family. In her first speech as a congress member, she said, "As a policy maker, my goal is simple: to work with each and every one of you to deliver for the American people, regardless of party. These are our people. If we choose common purpose over division, and people over politics, we can make the promise of America real again, because the American Dream does not belong to Republicans or Democrats. It belongs to every American who believes tomorrow can be better." On her first day, she signed the discharge petition for Dream and Promise Act, a bill to address our broken immigration system, and to give Dreamers a pathway to citizenship. The bipartisan bill needs one more signature to be taken up on the House floor. It will take a while for her office to be fully functional, but we have our representative back in DC. I have no doubt that she will do her best to help us and tackle our country's problems. Please meet her when she visits our communities, and tell her your problems and dreams. Please watch her speech on C-SPAN at www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDsd45AsGu8.

I hope you agree that she will serve our diverse district CA-14 well, and vote for her on Nov. 3.

Reelect Olivia Sanwong

David Furst, Livermore

I fully support the reelection of Olivia Sanwong to the Board of the East Bay Regional Park District. Although I am writing as an individual, I am a Director of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD). Through my work as a LARPD Director, I have had numerous conversations with Olivia. She is smart, is an experienced Board member, she listens, and most importantly, she represents the residents of the Livermore area to the East Bay Board. Based on the interview with her challenger that appeared in The Independent, he failed to mention that it was Olivia who appointed him to the EBRPD Park Advisory Committee. He also implied that the problems he identified were caused by Olivia and therefore there is “need for change”. Apparently, he has never served as an elected director, and so is unaware that with a seven-person board, a single board member has limited ability to make changes. I know

Reader Snapshots

Share Your Best Shot

We are looking for local photos to feature in The Independent’s Reader Snapshots section.

Whether it’s a beautiful moment, a slice of Tri-Valley life or something that made you smile, we want to see it.

Email your image, full name, city of residence and a brief caption to editor@independentnews.com for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue.



One of Livermore’s littlest residents shares a friendly thumbs-up with an iconic downtown fixture outside Bruno’s Italian Restaurant on First Street. (Photo courtesy of Bill Luty)

Angela Brady for LVJUSD School Board

Adam Feidy, Livermore

I am supporting Angela Brady for the Area 3 seat on the LVJUSD School Board.

I have gotten to know Angela through our children’s friendship at school and through Asbury United Methodist Church. What stands out to me is the way she treats people, especially children. Her interactions with kids are consistently kind, patient, and gentle. Children know when an adult genuinely listens to and respects them, and Angela does both.

As a parent, I want a school board that communicates openly with families and clearly explains its decisions. I also want every student to feel safe speaking up when something is wrong, regardless of their background or circumstances. Angela understands that some families face additional barriers when trying to access academic support, mental-health services, transportation, technology, or even basic information about available programs. She is committed to finding those gaps and making sure families do not fall through them.

Angela will listen carefully, ask difficult questions, and approach decisions with both compassion and common sense. Most importantly, I trust her to keep students at the center of the conversation.

I encourage Area 3 voters to support Angela Brady for LVJUSD School Board on November 3.

Supporting Larry Bird for LARPD

Lisa Teixeira, Livermore

As a longtime Livermore resident, I believe some of the most important qualities we can look for in our local leaders are a genuine connection to our community, a history of service, and an understanding of the programs and facilities that make Livermore such a great place to live.

That is why I am supporting Larry Bird for the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District Board.

While I don’t know Larry personally, I have been impressed by his long history of service to our community. He has lived in the Livermore community for more than 34 years and has spent 24 years coaching softball at Livermore High School, mentoring generations of local student athletes. He also brings 28 years of law enforcement experience, including leadership in community policing, volunteer programs and management of a

multimillion-dollar budget.

Just as important to me is that Larry isn’t approaching LARPD as an outsider. He currently works with the district as a pickleball instructor and liaison and understands firsthand the important role our parks, trails, sports fields and recreation programs play in our community.

I particularly appreciate his commitment to well-maintained facilities, programs that serve residents at every stage of life, fiscal responsibility, and giving residents a stronger voice in LARPD decisions. Those aren’t partisan issues — they’re community issues.

Livermore continues to grow and change, and I believe we need people on the LARPD Board who understand what makes our community special while also thinking about how we serve the next generation of Livermore residents.

Based on his decades of public service, involvement with local youth and hands-on experience with recreation in our community, I believe Larry Bird would bring a valuable perspective to the LARPD Board.

Welcome to Trump World: “Small Potatoes”?

Rosario Milelli, Pleasanton

First it was a “little excursion.” It would be short. We won. We were “winning.” Then it became a “military conflict.” Now, six months later, President Trump calls the war with Iran “small potatoes” and “not a big thing.”

Perhaps it is time to count the potatoes.

Eighteen American service members are dead. More than 750 have been injured. U.S. taxpayers have already spent more than \$37.5 billion—and that does not capture the full future cost of replacing depleted weapons, repairing equipment and bases, or caring for wounded veterans.

Then there are the people Trump apparently does not count. Thousands have been killed in Iran. By March 30 alone, the United Nations reported more than 2,100 Iranian civilians dead and nearly 28,000 injured.

The economic consequences extend far beyond the battlefield. Disruption of the Strait of Hormuz sent energy prices sharply higher. The International Monetary Fund has twice reduced its global growth forecast since the war began, from 3.3 percent in January to 3.0 percent. Higher energy and transportation costs have also

(See MAILBOX, page 7)



A drum major performs with military precision during piping and drumming competitions at the 160th Scottish Highland Gathering & Games, Saturday, Sept. 5, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. (Photo courtesy of ZstudioZ Productions)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 6)

fed inflation, reaching American families at the gas pump, grocery store and virtually everywhere goods must be transported.

And what has six months of war produced?

Iran has been badly damaged, but it has not surrendered. The Strait of Hormuz remains disrupted. American military readiness has been strained, with substantial quantities of critical missiles consumed. And there is still no clear path to ending the conflict.

Eighteen Americans dead. Hundreds wounded. Thousands dead in Iran. Tens of

billions spent. Higher prices at home and damage to the world economy.

“Small potatoes?”

Welcome to Trump World.

Our POTUS

Richard Andrews, Livermore

I wish I didn't have to say this about our POTUS. But his narcissism and continued deterioration into dementia is ruining our great country.

Besides a cabinet filled with people whose sole reason for being there is blind obedience, he has done so much illegal behavior he should be in prison. Now he's sent two totally

unqualified fools to talk to Putin about his illegal war. An experienced and wily adversary. Jared Kushner is an ignoramus with absolutely no skill nor experience in diplomacy, but still has made billions for himself. Add in Witkoff, who is even less qualified, and you have sent two sheep to negotiate with the wolf. Not ONE SINGLE EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT! On top of this travesty, MAGA Donny did not even consult with the victim, Ukraine, before he created his "great deal". Naturally, it has gone nowhere...well unless Jared got another hotel deal

somewhere, or a golf course.

The blatant arrogance this cabal is leading us into is a situation akin to 1860, with so much anger (mine included) that reasoned talk is becoming difficult at best. Pray that there is a Solomon out there to get us back on track.

Where Is Our President?

Frank Cannella, Livermore

Our president continues to file lawsuits attempting to limit mail-in ballots in the upcoming elections. He would tell you this is because of, in his words, rampant voter fraud, like what occurred when he lost the 2020 election. It is yet another of his "national emergencies" he keeps using whenever he wishes to avoid U.S. constitutional requirements in actions he takes. This, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that our elections are free and fairly counted. I believe the real reason he is pursuing this tack is that he knows his party is getting trounced in the upcoming midterm elections, and he'll be able to claim election fraud in every race MAGA candidates lose, since it is highly unlikely he will win his court fight on constitutional grounds. Of course, he will also claim MAGA losses are due to his not being on the ballot this cycle. His performance as president is on the ballot whether he likes it or not, and I believe a great number of the 77 million plus people who voted him into office two years ago are having serious second

thoughts about the wisdom of their choice. 77 million people gave Trump enormous power, and only a reconsideration by many of those same people can reverse this train wreck of an administration.

Meanwhile, Trump focuses on his planned 250-foot Arc de Trump, his ballroom decor, showing off his new heliport, his personal wealth, and how many buildings he can rename after himself. No word on the 40 trillion dollar deficit, realistic update on the Iran war, the price of gasoline, inflation, climate change, or the Epstein files.

Where did our president go?

The Party of Fiscal Responsibility?

Samuel Warner, Pleasanton

Our national debt is now at \$40 trillion. Can we even comprehend that number?

To conceptualize this staggering amount: one million seconds is about 11 days, one billion seconds is about 32 years, and one trillion seconds is 32,000 years. A trillion is a one with twelve zeros, and equals a thousand billions or a million millions.

Let's acknowledge how America grew such a huge debt: deficit-financed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and a series of revenue-reducing tax bills that mostly enriched the wealthiest Americans. Republicans continue to pretend that lowering taxes for the rich will supercharge growth and de-

crease deficits, and they continue to be wrong.

Just the INTEREST on this debt is now sucking up more of our public money than even the military and Medicare.

The so-called Big Beautiful Bill passed on a party line vote last year and provided massive tax breaks for America's best-off. In a single bill, Republicans added more to the debt than was added during Biden's entire term.

This year, billionaires' wealth grew by 25% on average, compared with a 10.8% rise in average personal wealth around the world, while the gap between the world's richest and poorest continues to grow. Last year, the World Inequality Report found fewer than 60,000 people – 0.001% of the world's population – control three times as much wealth as the bottom half of humanity.

It is shocking that those with that much wealth continue to get special treatment and tax breaks, while the majority of the population suffers. Let's make America great by taxing the rich, like we used to.



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TRASH

(Continued from front page)

Haubert and Wilson did not respond to The Independent's requests for comment by publication.

"I'm focused on exercising my rights under the California Public Records Act to obtain documentation that may change the county's stance on liability for employee errors, fraud, or maliciousness," Skov told The Independent in a September email statement. "I have not yet but may consider initiating a CPRA violation lawsuit in addition to pursuing damages relating to my original waste hauling issue."

The California Public Records Act gives the public the right to inspect or obtain copies of state and local government records, with certain exceptions.

The case also became part of Skov's push for greater oversight of Alameda County discretionary funds. She advocated for SB 1193, the Alameda County Discretionary Funds Transparency Act, authored by state Sen. Aisha Wahab.

The law requires a majority vote by the Board of Supervisors before discretionary funds are awarded and requires the county to publicly disclose the awards online. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed the legislation Aug. 27.

"SB 1193 is a simple standard: public money, public process, public trust," Wahab said.

Over several months, Skov pressed county officials for answers and accountability over the waste-service error and what she alleged was Wilson's improper use of discretionary funds.

The Independent reviewed the original waste-service notice, correspondence from Alameda County and LSI, the March 30 resolution demand, a proposed county settlement agreement and the July 6 complaint.

Among the allegations, Skov said Wilson proposed using county discretionary funds to make a \$1,500 donation to a nonprofit of her choice if she stopped publicly discussing the dispute. She said the proposal came during a February meeting at the District 1 office.

The two met again in March after Skov decided the earlier proposal would not compensate her for her financial losses. According to Skov, Wilson told her

he could not directly give her taxpayer money, advised her to pursue a claim against the county and discussed the possibility that the county could settle for \$5,000, \$7,000 or as much as \$10,000.

Skov formalized her request later that month in a letter reviewed by The Independent, seeking reimbursement for her financial losses and compensation for time spent trying to resolve the matter.

In June, County Counsel offered to reimburse Skov \$1,150.44 in LSI fees if she agreed to settle her claims. The county denied liability, citing state laws that provide immunity for certain claims involving misrepresentation.

She did not accept the proposed settlement.

Broader accountability concerns

The July 6 complaint raised broader allegations involving county funds, political activity, conflicts of interest and oversight within District 1. The complaint said the request for an investigation was not based solely on those allegations and cited broader concerns about county governance and accountability.

In an August email provided to The Independent, County Counsel Andrea Weddle said the county had received the complaint and was processing it.

Skov said an attorney conducting an independent county investigation interviewed her for about two hours Sept. 3. According to her account, the investigation includes allegations involving the LSI dispute, county funds, political activity, administrative oversight and conflicts of interest.

How the dispute unfolded

"The incorrect notice was sent to approximately 176 residents. As no addresses are directly associated with the email addresses, we do not know how many of the recipients are outside the mandatory service area," Alameda County Waste Program Manager Andrew Schneider told The Independent.

"The County is not aware of any affected residents other than Ms. Skov," Schneider said. He added that the county verified its mailing list and information sent to residents and "increased oversight of resident communications."

In January, Skov contacted LSI about stopping the service. In a Jan. 13 email reviewed by The Independent, the company confirmed her address was in an "Optional Service" area and stopped service effective Jan. 15.

"I sincerely apologize, on behalf of my District 1 Office staff, that you were provided false information," Wilson wrote in a Jan. 22 email reviewed by The Independent.

Skov then asked the county to reimburse the money she had paid LSI.

On May 13, Schneider sent a corrective notice acknowledging that the original communication contained incorrect information about mandatory and optional waste collection. The notice explained that residents in the optional service area are self-haulers by default and can request collection service from LSI.

After receiving the correction, Skov asked Schneider what remedies were available to residents who subscribed based on the incorrect information and which agency would handle reimbursement requests. Schneider directed residents to the county Waste Program.

Schneider said the county spent the months between confirming Skov's address was in the optional service area and issuing the corrective notice determining the source and scope of the error and how best to correct it.

"The County took the issue seriously and exercised due diligence in addressing this issue," Schneider said.

County Counsel said the county sent a corrective notice to recipients, worked with LSI to update service-zone information online and took steps to verify future outreach.

Skov continued pressing the county to determine whether other residents paid for service because of the notice and, if so, reimburse them.

"I want my money back, I want my community to get their money back," she said.

Records reviewed by The Independent document her efforts over several months to obtain reimbursement, correct the waste-service information and bring her broader allegations about Wilson's conduct to county officials.

"I've spent most of my adult life in rural communi-

ties and have never felt more compelled to advocate for reform," Skov said. "Long-time community members are well aware of how business is done and are exhausted with the culture of favors and self-dealing over public interest rather than the government anticipating our needs."

THE
INDEPENDENT
GALLERY

Award-Winning Local Artist
George Kanakis
Featuring Greek Themes &
California Landscapes



Born on the Greek island of Crete, local artist George Kanakis has called Pleasanton home for nearly 40 years. This special exhibition showcases his diverse collection of artwork, including oil paintings, watercolors, Indian ink drawings, acrylics, and sculpture. Inspired by both his Greek heritage and the beauty of California, George's work features scenes from Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Monterey, the Presidio, and Lake Del Valle, along with captivating Greek themes.

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Gallery Hours
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
&
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Art Gallery Sponsored by
LIVERMORE VALLEY
arts
&
THE Independent
2250 First St., Livermore

HOPE

(Continued from front page)

red words caught my eye: “There are no limitations, only possibilities.”

SCI-FIT is a physical therapy gym that specializes in spinal cord injuries, strokes and neurological disorders. The name is an acronym for “spinal cord injury functional integrated therapy.” With only six locations in the United States, SCI-FIT focuses on five key components: active and passive range of motion (stretching of the muscles), neck and trunk control balance, blood pressure stabilization, gait and movement patterns, and functional electrical stimulation (FES) to stimulate muscle activity. Every session is different — all catered to a unique, individual such as myself—and that’s what gave me hope. Every session is different — all catered to the unique, individual such as myself — and that’s what gave me hope.

The moment I wheeled into

the facility in Dublin, located at 6735 Sierra Ct., I knew it was no ordinary place for physical therapy. Surrounded by the sounds of upbeat music, gym equipment and motivational quotes imprinted on the walls, it uplifted my hopes. It introduced me to a whole new community — a place where people who were walking were the minority.

Fitness plans extend beyond muscular performance to the basics of body mechanics and aerobic endurance. They focus on finding balance and motor function within our bodies — the dexterity that works together to enable us to act and move. By working on posture and training the body to sit, walk, stand and lie where the least strain is placed on supporting muscles and ligaments during movement, the opportunities at SCI-FIT seem limitless.

My trainer, Bobby Huntington, stretched me beyond

my limits. Out of all the clients in this gym, I had the highest level of injury; I was scared that he wouldn’t do much with me. However, all it came down to was trust. Within the first day, I was doing much more than before—not only basic stretching but sitting upright without my vitals plummeting.

Huntington challenged me with electrical stimulation—using small electrical pulses to contract inactive muscles and prevent atrophy — as well as standing frames to get me up on my feet, which was rare because most of the time, I am either lying in bed or sitting in my wheelchair.

“Any time a client does something for the first time that they previously deemed ‘impossible,’ but now are able to do is the biggest highlight for me,” Huntington said.

Most importantly, he treated me not just as a patient, but as a friend.

Each week, I knew I was getting better. Yet the more I continued pushing myself forward, even harshly at times—the more discouraged I was, all because I couldn’t see any major improvement. With no voluntary movement, my body looked and felt the same as the day before and the day before that. However, the trainers are there to reassure you that any sort of injury should never define you.

“In my opinion as a health-care provider, I think instead of limiting or labeling a client by what they cannot do, we should shift the framework and focus on what a client can still do while creating the possibility of what more can happen,” Huntington said. “No matter how small the goal is, achieving that goal may be a huge improvement in someone’s quality of life or outlook on life.”

It surprised me how supportive the community was. Once you move through that door, you are greeted with so many welcomes. To be seen is the most encouraging thing to feel, since most people, when someone is in a wheelchair, just smile and nod.

Physical therapy should be accessible to everyone—not just people with a few broken bones, but also people who have severe injuries such as spinal cord injuries. Hope was and still is given each week as I spend two hours at SCI-FIT.

“Trust the journey, embrace the struggle, stay accountable, remain disciplined and never stop believing that your best days are still ahead,” is a prevailing motto at SCI-FIT.

For more information on the programs and services offered at the Dublin facility, visit sci-fit.org/locations/dublin/.

Premium Outlets to Host Mexican Independence Day Celebration

LIVERMORE — San Francisco Premium Outlets will host a Mexican Independence Day Celebration from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 12, featuring live performances by Mariachi Estelar, a traditional mariachi band from San Jose, and the Oakland-based Ballet Folklórico Mexicano dance company.

The celebration will also include children’s activities and giveaways.

The open-air Simon Property Group mall at 2774 Livermore Outlets Dr. includes more than 180 shops and 17 food outlets.

Mexican Independence Day commemorates the beginning of Mexico’s fight for independence from Spain in 1810. The war ended 11 years later when the Army of the Three Guarantees, comprised of Mexican guerillas and former Spanish troops entered Mexico City.

PHELPS

(Continued from front page)

process forced labor groups, district staff, administrators and trustees to come to terms with the district’s ongoing financial difficulties.

Phelps hopes to leverage his experience in general contracting to inform decisions involving construction costs and contractor wages. He questioned the tendency to select the lowest bidder, opting to look deeper into where those bids cut costs.

“I think I’m one of the scrappiest, best problem solvers you could possibly meet,” he said. “Do I have the answers? Maybe not right now, but I will find them. I will talk to the people that I need their expertise on, and I will discern the answer and come up with something fantastic.”

Phelps said he is well suited to address facility-maintenance issues, such as out-of-order bathrooms at LHS, that plague the district’s aging buildings. Other problems, such as a short, one-month timeframe allowed for public discussion of possible school closures during this year’s budget process, or \$364,000 spent to terminate the district’s contract with former Super-

intendent Torie Gibson, have hurt the board’s reputation, he continued.

“I’m basing my campaign off of a little bit of normalcy, transparency and someone who really cares,” Phelps said.

His platform also focuses on academic excellence, noting that only 52.9% of LVJUSD graduates have completed the college-preparatory courses required by the University of California and California State University.

“That is an instruction problem, and it is fixable,” Phelps wrote on his website.

Looking forward to other district issues, he sees his presence on the board helping to open more opportunities for graduates.

“In my wildest dreams, everyone would dream of being a teacher in Livermore,” Phelps said. “They would scrape, beg, borrow and steal to get into being a teacher or a superintendent or an office clerk or a vice principal or a principal. They would beg, borrow and steal to get into this school district. And as a board member, we’re the reason that that would or wouldn’t happen.”



Kiarra Bautista marks a major recovery milestone while attending her graduation ceremony at Las Positas College on May 30, 2026. (Photo courtesy of Kiarra Bautista)



Bautista at Yosemite National Park on Nov. 15, 2025, weeks before a Dec. 30 car accident left her paralyzed. (Photo courtesy of Kiarra Bautista)

COALITION

(Continued from front page)

Hotel to the City’s finances could be significant. The Coalition has stated that an EIFD would not increase residents’ taxes.

The hotel design shown in

the Coalition’s site plan off L Street is one that the hotel developer has approved.

The high-level hotel developer, who would bring 30 years of hotel development

and management experience to the Livermore project, said that the first step is for the City to contact him to discuss and work out the finances.

VANDENHEUVEL

(Continued from front page)

Two of his children have graduated from LHS, and his youngest child is currently an LHS senior. Voters elected VandenHeuvel to the LVJUSD board in 2024.

“Over these two years, I’ve sat with dozens of community members and heard from hundreds more by phone and email,” he wrote on his website. “My job wasn’t to agree with everyone. It was to make sure everyone felt heard before a decision got made. I plan to keep working that way.”

His priorities for the next term include ensuring accountability, listening to community members, and onboarding the district’s new superintendent, Anthony Limoges.

VandenHeuvel will keep his at-large seat through 2028 if he loses in November. If he wins, he will represent Area 5, which covers the southeastern portion of the city, and serve through 2030, creating an at-large vacancy that the board will fill either by appointment or special election.

Incumbent Trustee Deena Kaplanis and challenger Sam Phelps are also vying for the Area 5 seat. The candidates are approaching Election Day after a turbulent year for the district, one that involved the premature departure of former Superintendent Torie Gibson and the passage of budget cuts severe enough to have led to the consideration of closing two LVJUSD schools.

“I want to run on my record,” VandenHeuvel told The Independent. “I’ve made choices, and voted for things, and done things that I’m proud of. I’ve made mistakes or have let things slide that I shouldn’t have if I’d known — hindsight is 20/20. I’m not afraid to say: I don’t love everything, how it all works, how it all played out. Would I have done things differently? Absolutely. But I’d like to run on my record and say, ‘Go look, and you’ll see that this is somebody who’s proven leadership. He’s proven that he’s for all citizens and not just the ones that I agree with.’”

Although Gov. Gavin Newsom’s state budget revision in May boosted district revenues by some \$12.3 million, prior to that revision, the board adopted in February a budget involving \$14.8 million in reductions, including the elimination of 12 full-time employees. VandenHeuvel called the process “one of the hardest budget seasons this district has faced in years.”

During these deliberations, VandenHeuvel actively pushed for more budget reduction options, which ultimately helped avoid the closure of two local schools.

The ordeal, however, brought the district’s disparate players together under the common goal of supporting their students, VandenHeuvel said. The trustees, superintendent, administration and labor groups

endured tense discussions to find the best solution.

“Feelings were hurt,” he said. “Trust was built; trust was broken. We’re still having to rebuild some of that. But it was what was needed, and they very much did it like family and in that kind of Livermore way.”

The May revision reversed some of the earlier cuts, including the restoration of three full-time positions.

He also recognized that school staff remained on edge after Gibson left the district just 18 months into her four-year contract, saying it will likely take staff years to build trust in the current superintendent, Anthony Limoges. Gibson had succeeded former Superintendent Chris Van Schaack, who had held the seat for two years.

He acknowledged that mistakes were made surrounding the deteriorating relationship between the former superintendent and the board, tension that ultimately led to her departure.

Looking forward, VandenHeuvel hopes to foster a stronger district emerging from recent events. He asked voters to choose between someone who has learned his lessons through difficult months or somebody fresh.

“This place, this Livermore, is an amazing city,” he said. “We have amazing schools and we have incredible students, and there’s a lot to build on. So, I’m looking forward to that.”

HOUSING

(Continued from front page)

critical funding that allows us to move this project forward, and to all of our partners who helped make this possible.”

Eden Housing said it secured \$94.3 million in state funding, including \$39 million from the California Debt Limit Allocation Committee, \$47 million from the state Tax Credit Allocation Committee, and \$7.8 million from the state Department of Housing and Community Development Multifamily Housing Program.

The project had previously received \$6 million in Measure W funds from

Alameda County.

Groundbreaking on the project, which has faced opposition over its location from some community groups, is slated for early next year. An initial groundbreaking took place May, 18, 2026.

The one- to three-bedroom apartments in two four-story buildings at Railroad Avenue and South L Street will be available to families earning between 20% and 60% of the area’s median income.

“Housing security has always been a priority for our city and securing this funding is a major mile-

stone for this project,” said Livermore Mayor John Marchand. “Time and again, this project has been supported by Livermore voters. These 130 affordable homes will give more families the opportunity to work and live in Livermore, and we are excited to see this important project move toward construction.”

The city purchased land for the low-income housing project in 2009 and selected Eden Housing to develop the project in 2018. Based in Hayward, Eden Housing has developed more than 10,000 affordable homes in the Bay Area.

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EVENTS

Thursday, Sept. 10
LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY GARDEN CLUB MEETING

September’s meeting will be ‘The Joy of Gardening with Native Plants’ with Stephanie Pruegel, who is said to change a sad lawn into a thriving garden habitat! She is also known for Bringing Back the Natives garden tours, and co-leads Homegrown Habitats out of San Leandro. On Sept. 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Crosswinds Church, 1660 Freisman Rd., Livermore at the red Farm Theater Building.

Mondays, Sept. 14 and 21
OPEN REHEARSALS / AUDITIONS FOR VALLEY CONCERT CHORALE

The Valley Concert Chorale, the Tri-Valley’s premier chorus, is seeking new singers for its upcoming concert season and is holding open rehearsals on Sept. 14 and 21, 7 p.m. — 9 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth St., Livermore. Call (925) 866-4003 to schedule an audition. The Chorale is seeking experienced singers with sight-reading skills who enjoy singing exciting and challenging music. The 2026-2027 season features Mozart’s “Requiem”. More information is available at www.valleyconcertchorale.org.

Monday, Sept. 14
LIVERMORE-AMADOR GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Roger Prince will be presenting on “Transcription and Abstraction of Original Records.” He will cover best practices for manually transcribing old documents as well as using AI to generate a rough first transcription. Join via Zoom (see website to register: www.l-ags.org, click on Speakers & Topics). On Sept. 14, at 7:00 p.m. No charge, non-members welcome.

ONGOING EVENTS

FALL GRIEF WORKSHOPS

Held at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr., Pleasanton, on Sept. 3, 9, 17, 23, Oct. 1, 8, 15, and 22, starting at 7 pm. See catholicsofpleasanton.

org or call Barbara at 925-846-3904 for more info/registration.

DROP-IN GENEALOGY ASSISTANCE

Assistance by members of the Livermore-Amador Genealogy Society. On the first Wednesday of each month, 10:30 — 12:30, at Livermore Public Library, Civic Center Branch, Room 135.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

To find a local meeting in person or online, visit valleyservicecenteraa.org or call the 24-hour hotline at 925-829-0666.

SATURDAY PLEASANTON FARMERS MARKET

Open Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Main Street and West Angela Street. Seniors 60 and over are welcome for specialized shopping from 9 to 10 a.m.

SUNDAY LIVERMORE DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Open year-round on Sundays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in downtown Livermore, on Second St. between J St. and L St.

FOOD RELIEF SERVICES

Local residents can access vital food-assistance services to help meet basic needs. Food relief services can be found at: St. Vincent De Paul Food locker, 458 Maple St., Livermore (behind St. Michaels Church); Mon/Tues: 7-8 p.m., Wed/Thu: 4-5 p.m. Children’s Emergency Food Bank; 7421 Amarillo Rd., Dublin; appointments M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 925-828-5363; St. Raymond Catholic Church, 11555 Shannon Ave., Dublin; third Sat. of the month, 8 to 11 a.m.; Open Heart Kitchen; M-F, noon to 5 p.m.; 450 N. Livermore Ave., Livermore; Tri-Valley Haven Food Pantry, 150 N. “L” Street, Livermore; 925-449-1664 – M-Th, 1 to 5 p.m.; Fri/Sat 12 to 4 p.m.; Alameda County Community Food Bank; 510-635-3663; M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Stephan Paul Velsko July 8, 1955 — Aug. 24, 2026



Stephan Paul Velsko, 71, died Aug. 24, 2026, while battling stage 4 gastroesophageal cancer at Eden Hospital in Castro Valley, California. He was born July 8, 1955, in Beacon, New York to Paul Velsko, a World War II veteran and technician at Texaco Research, and Theodora Velsko (né Stupinski), a seamstress and homemaker. Steve had a typical 1960s upbringing and a short buzz haircut: he ran with the boys in the neighborhood, vexed his two older sisters, and did things we would now consider unsafe, such as blowing up fish from the creek and putting M80s or cherry bombs under abandoned bathtubs. He was a sometimes irreverent altar boy at St. Luke Episcopal parish in Beacon and played Little League. Steve attended Rombout Elementary School and then Beacon High School, where he excelled in mathematics, English, and history classes, and graduated in 1973. His extracurricular activities included learning and playing trumpet for the marching and concert bands, running track, teaching himself bass guitar and playing in a garage band. During the summers of his high school years, he worked as a groundskeeper for St. Luke parish and cemetery.

Steve's interest in the sciences started in his youth and was encouraged by his father, who brought chemicals or supplies home from work. Steve and his friends would carry out experiments in an old wooden garage that, fortunately, did not burn down when experiments went awry. At the University of Rochester (1973-1977), college classes were more challenging, but he obtained a double BA degree in Mathematics and Chemistry and did undergraduate research with Professor Mark Skeats, who encouraged him to attend graduate school in chemistry. During some of his college summer breaks, Steve lived with his sister, Irene, and worked as an orderly for Mary Manning Walsh Nursing Home in New York City.

The summer after college graduation, Steve did a DOE internship at Argonne National Lab. In the fall of 1977, he started graduate school at the University of Chicago (UoC) Department of Chemistry and met his future wife, Carol Molini, also a new graduate student there. He was able to combine his love for

both math and chemistry throughout his higher education and career. His first projects were theoretical studies of energy transfer in liquids with Professor David W. Oxtoby. He then shifted to experiments in Professor Graham R. Fleming's lab and received his Ph.D. in 1981. Steve's next chapter as a postdoctoral researcher was with Professor Robin Hochstrasser at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied nonlinear relaxation of vibrational states in solids. In 1984, Steve joined the Lasers Directorate at Lawrence Livermore Lab to search for new, nonlinear optical materials for high power lasers. He went on to develop and patent a frequency agile optical parametric oscillator for remote sensing of molecules in the atmosphere. He tested that system at the Nevada Test Site on a ground-based and an airborne platform. After the anthrax attacks, Steve started to develop the Lab's capabilities for Bioforensics, became an associate program leader in the Global Security Directorate, and explored the interplay of science, policy and legal issues for prosecuting potential bioweapons cases in the U.S. legal system. He worked with many, many people inside and outside of the Lab, published more than 100 scientific papers and book chapters, and accomplished his goals. He retired in November 2017, but kept engaged by working at the Lab part-time and preparing notes for two books he started to write.

Steve and Carol were very lucky to both get jobs at Livermore Lab; that meant they didn't have to commute in San Francisco Bay Area traffic. Since 1984, they have lived in Livermore where Steve enjoyed gardening, cooking, music, family

trips, wineries and drinking excellent scotch, bourbon or rye with just a splash of water. Since June 1981 (45 years!), he was a loving and patient husband and a partner in science, child-rearing, home improvement and cat tending. His family has called him pedantic, or a curmudgeon, but he was one of the smartest people we knew. After his daughters were born, he made up silly "Dad" songs and stories for them, and those will be passed on to his grandchildren. He enjoyed watching his daughters in every T-ball game, soccer and lacrosse match, swim meet, ballet, band and orchestra performance and graduation ceremony that he attended. Steve deeply loved his family, contributed his advice and experiences to them, and was proud of them for achieving their life goals. Steve is survived by his wife, Carol Velsko, daughters Irina Velsko of Leipzig, Germany and Anna Long (Paul) of Mission Viejo, California, grandson Theodore Long; sister Nancy Schmidt of Arvada, Colorado; nieces Elizabeth Zito, Liz Schmidt (Brian) and family; nephews Karl Schmidt (Suzette) and family, and Andrew Schmidt (Emily); as well as mother-in-law Shirley Molini, sisters-in-law Mary Kullman and family, Judith Meluni (John) and family; brothers-in-law Paul Molini Jr. (Carol) and family, and Richard Molini (Rose) and family. He was predeceased by his parents, Paul and Theodora Velsko, his sister Irene Zito, and his father-in-law Paul Molini Sr.

On Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026, please join us at Callaghan Mortuary, 3833 East Ave., Livermore, to remember Steve; viewing 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Memorial Service 1-2 p.m., followed by burial at Roselawn Cemetery, 1240 N. Livermore Ave., Livermore. We will conclude the day with a reception at Terra Mia Restaurant 3-6 p.m., 4040 East Ave., Livermore. If you would like to join us at Terra Mia, please RSVP via email to velsko@comcast.net or text/call 925-698-2478 so we can get a count of expected visitors.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Steve's honor to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (<https://www.aaas.org/support>) or the American Cancer Society (<https://donate.cancer.org/>).

Robert John Lyons Jan. 7, 1929 — June 19, 2026



Robert John Lyons was born on Jan. 7, 1929, in Steubenville, Ohio, and passed away peacefully at home in Livermore, California on June 19, 2026. His family moved from Ohio to California in 1941, where Bob attended St. Jarlath's Grammar School in Oakland. He went on to graduate from St. Mary's High School in 1947. The son of Irish immigrants, Bob embraced his heritage with pride, developing his natural gift of "Blarney." Strangers quickly became friends wherever he went through his engaging storytelling and recitations of poetry. He managed to charm beautiful Rose Caponio into marrying him in 1954, the same year he graduated early from Saint Mary's College in Moraga.

Intelligence, humor, heart, and the ability to communicate are the traits of a great educator, and Bob began his successful 40-year teaching career at Sacred Heart High School in San Francisco. Their oldest son Robert was born in 1955, followed by Shawn, Tom, Dan, and Kathleen – five kids in six years! Of all Bob's accomplishments, nothing compared to his pride in his wonderful family. In 1960, he joined the Fremont Unified staff where he was later recognized as teacher of the year. The family moved to Livermore in

1969, where he and Rose became active in Saint Charles Borromeo Parish. Their home was a social hub for teens and adults as all the Lyons kids inherited their father's sense of fun and humor. Bob went on to teach adult education citizenship classes for Pleasanton Unified and surrounding districts. He loved helping others become citizens of the USA.

In 1983, he organized "Those Who Care", a charitable group which raised money for food and clothing and cooked meals to assist people struggling on the streets of Oakland. When he retired from teaching in 1986, Bob remained active in the community through part-time work at local golf courses and welcoming guests to the tasting room at Wente

Winery. A perfect day for Bob included golf, wine, socializing with friends, and his family. In those golden years, he and Rose travelled with his local branch of SIR (Sons In Retirement) and enjoyed their many adventures enormously.

When his beloved wife of nearly 70 years was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, he remained faithfully by her side until her death in 2023. From that time on, Rose was the hero of most of the stories he told. On a paper found after his passing, he had written, "St. Peter, if we need reservations for the last supper, please save two seats for Rose and me." Bob chose to donate his remains to UCSF Medical Center for study, allowing his legacy of education and service to continue.

Bob is survived by his sons Bob (Anne), Shawn, Tom (Jill), Dan (Mary), his daughter Kathleen, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. He is predeceased by his wife Rose, and treasured granddaughter, Tate. A funeral service will be held at Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Livermore on Sept. 19, at 10:00 a.m. with a reception directly following. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org.

Diana May Miller March 15, 1938 — Aug. 30, 2026



District. After working there for 32 years, she retired as Director of Accounting in 2003.

Diana was a loving wife, sister, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who never forgot a birthday, and who always took an interest in what her family

Diana May Miller passed away peacefully in her sleep on Aug. 30, 2026, at 88 years of age. Diana was the oldest of five children born to Joseph Anthony Chyba and Lucille Catherine Smith in Baltimore, Maryland. She enjoyed horseback riding, which is how she met her husband, Donald Miller. They were married on June 12, 1957, for a total of 69 years. In late 1960, with two young daughters and a newborn in tow, they moved to California, where Donald started his career in Engineering, and a fourth child, Jon, was born. In addition to raising four children, Diana also worked part-time in the Business Offices at several local High Schools in Cupertino. In 1972, the family moved to Livermore, where Diana spent the rest of her life. Diana soon acquired a position in the Business Office at the Livermore School

members were doing. She took great pleasure visiting with her children, grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. She will be dearly missed. Diana is survived by her husband, Donald K. Miller, and by her daughters, Deborah Griego, Shari Adkins (Kurt), Michele Keegan (James), her two brothers, Joseph Chyba, Dennis Chyba, and her sister, Judy Fiedler. Also surviving her passing are her six grandchildren, Caroline (Yasser), Leah, Jacob (Karen), Kyle (Raina), Robert, and Christa (Jackson), and her five great-grandchildren, Zella, Oliver, Eli, Alanna, and Mabel. Diana was preceded in death by her son, Jon Donald Miller, and by her sister, Elaine Scherzo.

A service for Diana will be held on Thursday, Sept. 17, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Callaghan's Mortuary chapel in Livermore.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Rosalie Hope Rollins

Rosalie Hope Rollins, age 83, of Livermore, California, passed away peacefully, leaving behind a lasting legacy of warmth, laughter, and devotion.

Known to all simply as "Rose," she was a remarkably kind, fun-loving woman whose bright spirit brought joy to everyone she met. Above all else, Rose's greatest pride was her family. For 65 years,

she was a dedicated wife, and was a deeply loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Alongside her dedication at home, Rose worked for 17 years as a bookkeeper and cashier for Lucky Stores, where her friendly demeanor was treasured by customers and coworkers alike.

Rose is survived by her beloved husband, Gary; her children,

Julie, Kimberly, Keith, Sherry, and Danielle; and her cherished grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Elaine, and her son, Brett.

A memorial service celebrating Rose's vibrant life will be held on Sept. 25, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., at Callaghan Mortuary (3833 East Ave., Livermore, CA).

Charles "Chuck" Edward Cole Dec. 2, 1937 – Aug. 23, 2026



Charles "Chuck" Edward Cole, beloved husband, father, brother, grandfather, great-grandfather, veteran, computer pioneer, theater advocate, traveler, sports fan, and friend, passed away peacefully on Aug. 23, 2026. He was born on Dec. 2, 1937, in a log cabin in Greenup, Kentucky. Chuck spent his early childhood education in a one-room schoolhouse with a dirt floor, a humble beginning that stood in remarkable contrast to the sophisticated computer technology that would later define much of his career.

At the age of 17, Chuck joined the United States Navy and served from 1954 to 1958 as a sonar operator aboard the USS Conway (DD-507), a Fletcher-class destroyer. His Navy service was an important early chapter in a life that would be marked by dedication, technical skill, and service to others. In 1959, he joined Remington Rand as the computer revolution was beginning to transform the world. He became involved with the UNIVAC I, one of the first commercially available general-purpose computers. He worked on the installation and operation of the ILLIAC IV computer system at NASA, an experience that led to employment at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). During his 30 years at LLNL, Chuck held a variety of assignments including establishing the Lab's first computer security organization and the formation of the Computer Incident Advisory Capability (CIAC) group to respond to the rapidly growing computer security threats brought about by the Internet and increasing global connectivity.

Chuck approached life with curiosity, determination, and a wonderful sense of humor. He had a quick wit and enjoyed making people laugh. His humor was one of the ways he connected with people, and family

and friends will remember not only the things he accomplished, but also the laughter that accompanied so many of their memories of him. His humor was intelligent, sometimes mischievous, and often delivered with a completely straight face. Whether among colleagues, friends, or family, those who knew him well learned to listen carefully — because the funniest part of what Chuck said was not always the part they expected.

He was deeply passionate about community theater. He believed in the importance of the arts and became a dedicated advocate for local theatre. In Pleasanton, California, lobbying successfully for funding to build a new theater for the town. He took great joy in performing; having the ability to make people laugh or feel something deeply was very much a part of who he was. His love of theater remained a lifelong passion.

Chuck also loved to travel. He was fascinated by the world and treasured the opportunity to explore Europe, South America, Canada, and many parts of the United States. He embraced the experiences, cultures, places, and people he encountered along the way.

He was also an enthusiastic sports fan and loved all sports, whether viewing or participating in them. He was an

avid golfer for most of his life. Whether enjoying a performance, following a game, traveling to a new place, or talking with family and friends, Chuck had a genuine enthusiasm for life. He loved conversation and enjoyed being around people. He could be serious when the moment called for it, but he was rarely far from a smile or a hug.

Chuck shared 52 years of marriage with his beloved wife, Pat. Together they built a family and a life filled with love, adventure, laughter, life-long friends, and countless memories. His family knew him not simply as a man of measurable accomplishments, but as a husband and father whose personality, humor, stories, and enthusiasm became part of the fabric of family life.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Lillian Cole, and his brother, Robert Paul Cole.

He is survived by his wife, Pat; his sister, Marilyn; his children, Vicki and her husband, Roy; Debbie; Mike; and Scott and his wife, Hope; five granddaughters; 11 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter, his many much-loved nieces and nephews, along with extended family and his many friends. He will be remembered for the simple things that made him Chuck: his warmth, sense of humor, and loving care for his family and friends. He left the world a better place through the lives he touched and the laughter he shared along the way.

He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

A private family service will be held at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida, where Chuck will be laid to rest with full military honors in recognition of his honorable service in the United States Navy.

Mary Ann Hallum Jan. 5, 1934 – Aug. 18, 2026



Mary Ann Hallum, a beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend, passed away on Aug. 18, 2026, at the age of 92.

Mary Ann was born in Nocona, Texas on Jan. 5, 1934, to Vincent Rotta and Lily Pellegrinelli. There were five siblings total, including one brother and three sisters. Her family relocated to California when Mary Ann was a child. She attended Emery High School, where she met Willie Monroe Hallum. The two were married on Feb. 15, 1953. Mary Ann and Willie made their home in Pleasanton, California in 1968, where they raised their three children, Roxanne, Rhonda, and Christopher. They shared 46 years of marriage before Willie's passing in 1999.

Mary Ann was deeply passionate about her family's success and encouraged her children to excel in education. She led by example with an extraordinary work ethic and held a variety of jobs throughout her life to provide for her family. In her later years, she worked at J.C. Penney and received an award recognizing her for always having a smile on her face and making customers feel welcome. It was a fitting reflection of the warmth and dedication she brought to her work and to the people around her.

Her remarkable strength and de-

termination carried Mary Ann through some of life's greatest challenges. She survived both colon cancer and throat cancer, while caring for her husband who was debilitated with strokes and facing each with the resilience that characterized so much of her life.

In her free time, Mary Ann was an enthusiastic Bay Area sports fan. She had Oakland Raiders season tickets for many years and enjoyed watching the Oakland A's. In addition to sports, she enjoyed canning, baking, and crocheting blankets for her grandchildren. She maintained great agility late in life due to working in the yard and walking her beloved puppy, Sophie.

Mary Ann also shared an especially close bond with her sisters. She loved spending time with them, especially boating together at Lake

Don Pedro. Those days on the water were filled with laughter and the companionship the sisters shared throughout their lives.

Above all, Mary Ann loved her family and treasured the time she spent with her grandchildren. She shared their interests and created memories with them that lasted well beyond childhood. She collected baseball cards with some of her grandsons, attended sporting and school events and was present at any moment she could support her family. Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were an important part of her life and are a lasting part of the legacy she leaves behind.

Mary Ann was preceded in death by her husband, Willie Monroe Hallum; her brother, Vincent Rotta; and her sister, Lenora DiDonato. She is survived by her sisters, Betty Kaufman and Glenna Rotta; her children Roxanne (John) Plotts, Rhonda Hallum, and Christopher (Kristina) Hallum; her grandchildren, Derek Hallum, Bryan (Jessie) and Kyle (Jen) Plotts, and Melissa, Jessica, and Olivia Hallum; and her great-grandchildren, Wren and Ryan Plotts, Lily and Leo Hallum, and Parker and Morgan Plotts.

Services will be held at St. Augustine's church in Pleasanton on Sept. 26 at 10:00 a.m.

Bonnie Toy April 22, 1940 – Aug. 23, 2026



Bonnie Toy passed away peacefully at her home in Plymouth surrounded by her family.

She was raised in Winnemucca, Nevada. While attending Stanford University, she met Art, and they were married for 65 years. Art and Bonnie built a community of friends wherever they lived.

While they raised their children in Livermore, Bonnie taught art at Granada, received her master's in computer science from UC Davis, and worked for LLNL, Cray Research and Sun Microsystems where she retired as a Director of Software Engineering.

Bonnie loved serving others from mentoring teens to teaching adult education classes. In re-

She was a lifelong learner who never shied away from a project. Every place that she touched, she will be greatly missed.

She was happy working in her garden, which produced a legendary bounty that she joyfully shared with friends, neighbors, and food banks.

Dedicated to her family, she is survived by her brother John; children Michael (Linda), Paula (Bret), and Sam (Heidi); grandchildren Kelsey, Christopher, Thomas, Josie (Julia), Daniel (Annie), Ruth (Joseph), and Grace; nieces and nephews, cousins and kin.

We plan to celebrate Bonnie on her birthday in April. Condolences bonnie@toyland.org.

Granada Girls Volleyball Team Overcomes Amador Valley

By Phil Jensen

LIVERMORE – Granada High School girls volleyball coach Rich Cortez said his team’s four-set victory over visiting Amador Valley on Sept. 3 was huge since it was the league opener in the East Bay Athletic League gauntlet.

There was another historical reason that the 22-25, 25-23, 30-28, 25-17 win was enormous; it was the first time since Oct. 11, 2017, a span of 18 matches, that the Matadors girls volleyball team defeated the Dons.

“It’s been a while, so yeah, anytime we beat one of the top teams, it’s a huge win,” said Cortez, who has coached the Matadors since 2013. “It’s a big win because we need to get W’s in our half (of the league) ... and they’re hard to come by.”

This victory was certainly hard to come by for Granada, which improved to 8-5 overall with the victory.

Amador Valley, which was playing its first match of the season, came back from a 12-8 deficit in the first set to win it. The second set was extremely close, but a pair of kills by Granada sophomore Maddie Mutz broke a 23-23 tie and evened the set score at 1-1. The team’s young players were a key to the victory.

“Our two pin hitters ... one’s a freshman, one’s a sophomore,” Cortez said.

“(Mutz) was our best passer and she had 13 kills.”

Mutz also had an impressive .367 hitting per-

and also contributed eight kills.

Izabella De Ocampo, a returning second-team All-

Bonaventure converted two blocks into points in a comeback win for the Matadors.



Granada’s Anabel van Niekerk (7) goes for a kill in a victory for the Matadors girls volleyball team against Albany on Aug. 29 in the Livermore Tournament. (Photo courtesy of Livermore-Granada Boosters)

centage and 2.7 passing rating. Freshman outside hitter Kate Bodily had a 2.1 passer rating and .333 hitting percentage. Cortez said that Bodily also played excellent defense.

Freshman opposite hitter Charlotte Rosana led the team in kills with 14 and had two blocks. Junior middle blocker Khloe Bonaventure paced the squad with three blocks

League player for Granada as a libero, paced the team in aces with four. “Izzy was awesome,” said Cortez of the senior. “We scored a lot of points when she served.”

Bonaventure, De Ocampo, junior outside hitter Anabel van Niekerk and sophomore opposite hitter Abby Wunderlich are returning starters for the Matadors. In the third set against Amador Valley,

Miramonte Methodically Beats Granada High Football Team

By Phil Jensen

LIVERMORE — When the Granada High School football team’s quarterback Caiden Van Leer connected with receiver Ethan Mitchell for an 81-yard, third-quarter touchdown on Sept. 4, Granada was back in the game against visiting Miramonte after trailing from the second quarter on.

But in the final quarter of Granada’s home opener, Miramonte proceeded to do what it did on all of its touchdown drives – methodically move the ball. Miramonte scored the final touchdown of the game with 3:06 remaining to win 17-7.

“They executed well,” said Granada coach Brandon Black about Miramonte. “Their offense moved the ball well. They did a great job. Hats off to them.”

Miramonte (2-0) had possession of the ball for 19:55 of the 24-minute second half, as Granada (1-1) ran only eight offensive plays, including its touchdown pass.

“They do a great job taking away things we want to do in the pass game, so we wanted to run the ball. And we really did that,” said Miramonte coach Nick Safir, whose squad rushed for 150

yards. “That’s a heck of a football team. I have nothing but respect for coach Black.”

Granada will look to get back on track when it travels to face San Leandro Friday at 7 p.m. The Pirates are 1-1 after a 21-20 victory over Antioch on Sept. 4.

In Granada’s game on Sept. 4, Miramonte’s first possession covered 60 yards on nine plays before Bennett Caspari kicked a 26-yard field goal with 5:48 left in the first quarter. Granada’s Skyler Stuart returned the ensuing kickoff 93 yards for what appeared to be a touchdown, but the play was called back due to a penalty.

After a Granada three-and-out, Miramonte marched 65 yards on 13 plays to score. Miramonte had a first down and 10 play on the Granada 20, but it took the offense seven plays after that to score, finally reaching the end zone on a four-yard pass from Lane Dalton to Parker Bjornson.

“They were on the field a lot,” Black said about his defense. “And very opposite of last week, we were on the field a lot. ... (Miramonte) had a great defensive game plan, and we’ve just got to get better.”

In Granada’s opener on

Amador Valley, which was missing returning first-team all-leaguer Alexis Malakhova due to an injury, came back from the four-point deficit in the first set to win it. A kill by Humphries started a 3-1 Dons run to end that set.

Cortez said a key win in the team’s nonleague season came against Albany in the Livermore Tournament on Aug. 29. “That was the turning point for us,” he said. “The whole team played really good defense, just a lot of energy and better ball control.”

Granada hosted Foothill on Sept. 8 after this article’s deadline. The Matadors travel to face Dougherty Valley tonight at 6:15 p.m. and Foothill on Sept. 15 at the same starting time.

Amador Valley hosted Carondelet on Sept. 8 and travels to face California tonight at 6:15 p.m. The Dons also travel to play Dublin on Sept. 15 at 6:15 p.m.



Postseason Ban Hits Amador

By Mitch Stephens

The last Tri-Valley boys basketball program left standing in 2025-26 is already the first eliminated for the next two seasons.

That, unfortunately, is no big surprise.

As first reported by the Bay Area News Group on Saturday, Sept. 5, the Amador Valley boys basketball team won’t be eligible for the North Coast Section playoffs until 2029 due to violations of “eligibility, residency and recruiting practices,” according to an email sent to school parents from Principal Matthew Norrington on Friday, Sept. 4.

A truly rocky season that began promisingly with a No. 15 preseason state ranking by Cal-Hi Sports, ended 21-13 (5-4 in East Bay Athletic League play), which was somewhat disappointing. But with a late-season rally, the Dons went farther than all Tri-Valley teams including Granada, Livermore and Dublin, which all enjoyed landmark and overachieving seasons.

According to the email, which was forwarded to The Independent on Monday, Amador Valley will forfeit all games in which it used ineligible players during the 2025-26 season, that ended on March 7 with a 74-71 Northern California Division 2 semifinal loss to Oakland Tech. That record figures to take a big hit once it is determined which players were deemed ineligible.

In addition, the rest of the school’s athletic teams have also been placed on probation but will be eligible for NCS playoff competition.

“These consequences are significant and we accept full responsibility for addressing the violations and strengthening our practices and systems to prevent them from occurring in the future,” Norrington wrote, noting that NCS might consider lessening the boys basketball teams’ sanction to one year if it stay clean.

A similar two-year ban was placed on El Cerrito’s football team heading into the 2024 season. It was reduced to one season and the Gauchos rebounded to win the state Division 4-A championship in 2025.

Amador Valley and NCS officials declined to talk about the specifics of this case, but red flags were raised when at least four new players had transferred in before the 2025-26 season, two of whom were never granted eligibility by NCS.

According to area coaches, although it is nothing in writing, NCS officials will investigate any basketball program with two or more transfers.

According to Norrington, concerns were raised about the boys basketball program earlier this year. “In response, Amador Valley High School and the Pleasanton Unified School District conducted an investigation,” he wrote. They

found violations and “consistent with our responsibility to act with transparency and integrity, we self-reported those findings to the North Coast Section.”

Because the school self-reported, the penalties apparently were lessened.

According to the Bay Area News Group, sixth-year coach Willis Gardner resigned in June “for personal reasons.” David Eplin is listed as the new coach. Text messages to Gardner were not immediately returned.

Football follow: Livermore football coach John Wade was not discouraged by an opening-night loss in Ripon on Aug. 28, and his young squad showed why at home Friday, (Sept. 4) with a 13-0 win over Amador Valley.

It was just the Cowboys’ third win over the Dons in their last 19 meetings since 2004. The others came in 2021 (21-7) and 2016 (21-20).

The Cowboys (1-1), who won their first league title since 1994 by going 9-2 last season, lost 28 seniors to graduation off that team but an influx of young talent, led by quarterback Maximus Beck and receiver/cornerbacks Jaden Ergas and Jack Wilhite, all sophomores, and junior Chad Boskie—gives Wade plenty of optimism for Livermore to compete for another title.

Foothill (1-1) got 117 more yards rushing and a touchdown from Amaree Hill, and receivers Max Shuga (7 catches, 117 yards) and Nate Walinski (3, 100) each caught scoring strikes from Andrew Nelson in a 41-29 home loss to Analy-Sebastopol.

In other results last week, Dublin (0-2) lost at Vanden-Fairfield, 21-0, Granada (1-1) dropped a 17-7 game to defending NCS D4 champion Miramonte-Orinda and Emerald-Dublin (0-1) lost at American-Fremont, 20-0, in the school’s first varsity football game in school history.

Friday games: At 7 p.m., Lowell-San Francisco at Emerald, Elk Grove at Dublin, and Foothill at Las Lomas-Walnut Creek. Burton-San Francisco plays at Livermore at 7:15 p.m.

Long distance, fast start: Local cross-country runners, many among the best in NCS, started strong at the Acalanes Invitational in Lafayette.

Granada sophomore Elise Bayan-Ruiz edged senior teammate Sade Bumpus at the line to win the girls 2-mile race in 11 minutes, 37.7 seconds to 11:37.9. Sophomore Jordan Mattern and seniors Taylor Conover and Grace Espinoza placed 10th, 12th and 13th, respectively for the Matadors, who won the team competition going away with 38 points.

In the boys race, Granada went 1-2-3, led by freshman Eli Hernandez (9:41.3), followed by juniors Alex van Veen (9:48.9) and Colton Biovna (9:49.3). Granada finished with 19 points to 76 for runner-up Lynbrook-San Jose.



Granada’s Ethan Mitchell (2) heads to the end zone on a touchdown pass from Caiden Van Leer as Skyler Stuart (1) celebrates in the third quarter of the Sept. 4 game against Miramonte-Orinda at Livermore. (Photo courtesy of Livermore-Granada Boosters)

Winning Young Artist Submission To be Displayed in Dublin Gallery

DUBLIN — Winning entries in the Mayor Sherry

Hu’s Young Artists Showcase, presented by the Dublin Arts Collective (DAC) and celebrating the creativity, imagination and artistic achievements of students in kindergarten through high school, will be on display at The Frame Company and Art Gallery, 7038 Village Parkway, for two weeks beginning Saturday, Sept. 19.

There will also be a public

reception from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sept. 19.

The nonprofit DAC is sponsoring the art show in recognition of National Arts in Education Week, a national celebration established by Congress in 2010, which this year runs from Sunday, Sept. 13, through Saturday, Sept. 19.

Students who live in or attend school in Dublin were invited to submit original artwork for the showcase,

including drawings, paintings, digital art, photography, sculpture, ceramics, fiber arts and mixed media with the general theme “Your Voice, Your Vision.”

There were divisions for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Awards will include the Mayor’s Choice Award and a People’s Choice Award, in addition to first, second and third place and honorable mentions in each division.

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LEGAL NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625103

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Mel's Magic; 2. Mel's Magic Bags, 960 Shorepoint Ct, Apt 311, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Protogen LLC, 1401 21st St, Ste R, Sacramento, CA 95811. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Melania J. Rivas Lemoine, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 4, 2026. Expires August 3, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6978. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625215

The following person(s) doing business as: LBF Enterprises, 1264 Stealth ST, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Powermatic Associates, Inc., 1264 Stealth ST, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 7/1/1972. Signature of Registrant/s/: Frank Nudo III, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 7, 2026. Expires August 6, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6979. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625444

The following person(s) doing business as: Mothers Kitchen, 1857 Rheem Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Uma Annamalai, 1857 Rheem Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 7/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Uma Annamalai, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 7, 2026. Expires July 6, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6980. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625446

The following person(s) doing business as: Chettind Kitchen, 1857 Rheem Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sanjiv P. Annamalai, 1857 Rheem Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 7/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sanjiv P. Annamalai, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 7, 2026. Expires July 6, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6981. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625178

The following person(s) doing business as: Willamette International Travel, 1677 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, CA 94709 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Going Places Travel, Inc., 1677 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, CA 94709. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Kevin Saxe, Managing Director. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 6, 2026. Expires August 5, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6982. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625253

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Lunure; 2. Lunure Baby, 1313 Lincoln Avenue, Apt C, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jessica Murray, 1313 Lincoln Avenue, Apt C, Alameda, CA 94501. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 12/1/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jessica Murray, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 10, 2026. Expires August 9, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6983. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625000

The following person(s) doing business as: Klean Karz, 4361 Technology DR, Unit B, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Klean Homes Inc., 4361 Technology DR, Unit B, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Hector Arana, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 29, 2026. Expires July 28, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6984. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625034

The following person(s) doing business as: Party Printer, 111 Traynor ST, Hayward, CA 94544 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Silver Rainbow LLC, 1309 Coffeen Avenue, Ste 1200, Sheridan, Wyoming 82801. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Sig-

nature of Registrant/s/: Scott Johnson, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 30, 2026. Expires July 29, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6985. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625286

The following person(s) doing business as: Raphael Stone, 14694 Wicks Blvd, San Leandro, CA 94577 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nu-vira Stone Inc., 14694 Wicks Blvd, San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 5/18/2018. Signature of Registrant/s/: Eldian Ben Hamo, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 11, 2026. Expires August 10, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6986. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625350

The following person(s) doing business as: Bhumetric, 2257 Minerva CT, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Soil Metrics Incorporated, 2257 Minerva CT, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jagdish Girimaji, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 13, 2026. Expires August 12, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6987. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625104

The following person(s) doing business as: Bubble Brtte Laundromat, 183 S N ST, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bubble Brtte Laundry Group LLC, 400 Pimlico DR, Ste 114-104, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Dave Steele, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 4, 2026. Expires August 3, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6988. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625235

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Livermore Gymnastic Center; 2. Livermore Gymnastics, 1110 E Stanley Blvd, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Little Gymnastics Club, Inc., 111 E Stanley Blvd, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 6/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Kelsey Costello, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 7, 2026. Expires August 6, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6989. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625093

The following person(s) doing business as: Tibetan Herb Tea, 2096 Merced Street, San Leandro, CA 94577 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Stella Phan, 2096 Merced Street, San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Stella Phan, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 3, 2026. Expires August 2, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6990. Published August 20, 27, September 3, 10, 2026.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 591622

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). MyKitchenCalculator.com, 3101 Barrett CT, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Registered by the following owner(s): Ernest Ray Lee, 3101 Barrett CT, Castro Valley, CA 94546. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 8/31/2022 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individual. Signature of Registrant/s/: Erica Starkey, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 13, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 6991. Published August 12, 20,

27, September 3, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625420

The following person(s) doing business as: Black Sheep Theater Company, 1024 47th ST, APT 2, Emeryville, CA 94608 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Micaela Groman, 1024 47th ST, APT 2, Emeryville, CA 94608. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/30/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Micaela Groman, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 17, 2026. Expires August 16, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6992. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625417

The following person(s) doing business as: Baitwo Studio, 6 Arundel DR, Hayward, CA 94542 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mission Education LLC, 6 Arundel DR, Hayward, CA 94542. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/17/26. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ruomeng Bai, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 17, 2026. Expires August 16, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6993. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625062

The following person(s) doing business as: Adi Opera, 35466 Eden Court, Fremont, CA 94536-3318 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Anusuya Sistla, 35466 Eden Court, Fremont, CA 94536. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 5/5/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Anusuya Sistla, MS3. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 31, 2026. Expires July 30, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6994. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625530

The following person(s) doing business as: Molten Theory, 34383 Alvarado Niles RD # 314, Union City, CA 94587 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Syed Abidi, 34383 Alvarado Niles RD, #314, Union City, CA 94587. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Syed Abidi, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 21, 2026. Expires August 20, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6995. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625340

The following person(s) doing business as: 2332 Chamber Chatters Club, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Toastmasters International, 9127 South Jamaica ST, Ste 400, Englewood, CO 80112. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 11/20/2002. Signature of Registrant/s/: Angu Sundaresh Krishna Kumar, Treasurer. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 12, 2026. Expires August 11, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6996. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625244

The following person(s) doing business as: For Aesthetic Value, 2390 Pasatiempo, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mikayla Henry, 2390 Pasatiempo, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 3/16/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Mikayla Henry, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 7, 2026. Expires August 6, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6997. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625107

The following person(s) doing business as: MC & Associates Tax and Financial, 4049 First ST, STE 126, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the follow-

ing owner(s): Melissa Cook Tax Preparation LLC, 4049 First ST, STE 126 Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 3/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Melissa Cook, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 4, 2026. Expires August 3, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6998. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625463

The following person(s) doing business as: JLS Tax Strategies, 4049 First ST, STE 126, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): James Settle, 4049 First ST, STE 126, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 6/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: James Settle, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 18, 2026. Expires August 17, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6999. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625383

The following person(s) doing business as: Vine & Smoke BBQ, 1048 Glenn CMN, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Vine and Smoke BBQ LLC, 1048 Glenn CMN, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jarred Bitcon, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 14, 2026. Expires August 13, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7000. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625495

The following person(s) doing business as: Autochamp, 7000 Village Pkwy L, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bizchamp, 4599 Alta Terra Road, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/21/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sriekha Deka, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 21, 2026. Expires August 20, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7001. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625482

The following person(s) doing business as: Spotlight Services, 7338 Quartz Cir, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gerald Gallardo, 7338 Quartz Cir, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/25/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Alexandria Killingsworth, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 25, 2026. Expires August 24, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7002. Published August 27, September 3, 10, 17, 2026.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 612056

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). WP Cattle Co, 6999 Arroyo Road, Livermore, CA 94550. Registered by the following owner(s): Paul D. Banke, P.O. BOX 55, Livermore, CA 94550. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 1/28/2025 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individual. Signature of Registrant/s/: Kathy Banke, Trustee for Paul Banke. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 18, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 7003. Published August 13, 20, 27, September 3, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625054

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Fever Nap Studio; 2. Fever Nap Games; 3. Fever Nap, 2414 Tenth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Fever Nap Studio LLC, 2414 Tenth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on

N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Hongshuai Feng, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 31, 2026. Expires July 30, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7004. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625175

The following person(s) doing business as: Orange Cap Rental Co., 6486 Alvord Way, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): JBA Real Estate Operations LLC, 6486 Alvord Way, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/5/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Di-naker Juvadi, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 5, 2026. Expires August 4, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7005. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625574

The following person(s) doing business as: It Starts With Us Housing and Community Development International, 1900 Powell Street, Suite 700, Emeryville, CA 94608 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): It Starts With Us Foundation International, 1900 Powell Street, Suite 700, Alameda, CA 94608. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/24/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Willetta Heard, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 24, 2026. Expires August 23, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7006. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625531

The following person(s) doing business as: Cupcake Castle, 4198 Rennellwood Way, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sriekha Deka, 4198 Rennellwood Way, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/21/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sriekha Deka, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 21, 2026. Expires August 20, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7007. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625587

The following person(s) doing business as: Warner Place, 2404 Warner Ave, Oakland, CA 94603 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Alexandria Killingsworth, 2404 Warner Ave, Oakland, CA 94603. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 8/25/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Alexandria Killingsworth, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 25, 2026. Expires August 24, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7008. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625640

The following person(s) doing business as: Texterra Studio, 11501 Dublin Blvd, STE 200, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Noorfathima Magesh, 11501 Dublin Blvd, STE 200, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Noorfathima Magesh, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 27, 2026. Expires August 26, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7009. Published September 3, 10, 17, 24, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625664

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Econojunk; 2. Fastshred, 290 Rickenbacker Circle, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pro Solar Inc., 290 Rickenbacker Circle, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Luna Gilas, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 28, 2026. Expires August 27, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7010. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625586

The following person(s) doing business as: East Bay Lawn Mower, 729 West A Street, Hayward Acres, CA 94541 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nobue Okano, 729 West A Street, Hayward Acres, CA 94541. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 2/1/1977. Signature of Registrant/s/: Nobue Okano, Sole Proprietor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 25, 2026. Expires August 24, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7011. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625654

The following person(s) doing business as: Kestrel Safety Training, 2204 Normandy Circle, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gerry Laird, 2204 Normandy Circle, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Gerry Laird, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 28, 2026. Expires August 27, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7012. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625411

The following person(s) doing business as: Nail Fairy Mary, 157 S N ST, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mariela Chacon, 3305 Foxtail Terrace, Fremont, CA 94536. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to trans-

act business under the fictitious business name listed above on 12/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Mariela Chacon, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 14, 2026. Expires August 13, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7013. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625366

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Iron Horse Vetcare; 2. Iron Horse Animal Specialty Hospital, 7660 Amador Valley Blvd, Suite E, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): VSC Vetcare, Inc., 7660 Amador Valley Blvd, Suite E, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 7/1/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: John J. Haburjak, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 13, 2026. Expires August 12, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7014. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625813

The following person(s) doing business as: Ella Dopp, 2450 Rees Circle, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Elizabeth Crowder, 2450 Rees Circle, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on 9/3/226. Signature of Registrant/s/: Elizabeth Crowder, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 4, 2026. Expires September 3, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7015. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 625741

The following person(s) doing business as: Vallejo Sky, 21702 Vallejo ST, APT 7, Hayward, CA 94541 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Muy Kong, 21702 Vallejo ST, APT 7, Hayward, CA 94541. This business is conducted by an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Muy Kong, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 2, 2026. Expires September 1, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 7016. Published September 10, 17, 24, October 1, 2026.

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Amador Valley Senior's Photos Earn International Recognition

By Kathryn Stroud

PLEASANTON – Jeffrey Liu has spent a lot of time waiting at BART stations with a camera in hand, documenting commuters and travelers as they pass through a place that nobody actually wants to be. His patience paid off in a big way.

The Amador Valley High School senior was honored earlier this year with publication in American Pho-

trips and a lot of waiting around. Liu said he has photographed plenty of downtown areas across the Bay Area, but BART occupies a different kind of space in his work.

"BART is a little more special. I've taken photographs of (many) downtowns in the Bay Area, and each one resonated in a different way, but BART is different," Liu said.

He drew a distinction

lots of different people using it as an intermediary place," he said. For Liu, the station became an unlikely subject precisely because it is not trying to be beautiful.

"It's taking something mundane, something that might not seem like the most aesthetically pleasing place, and telling a piece of a story," he said. "It's mundane, and it can be something profound."

The senior is not only an award-winning pho-

college applications, he plans to keep developing his art, but he is not narrowing his focus to one discipline. He currently serves as president of the Amador Valley High's Physics Club.

"It's a stark contrast to visual arts," he said. Still, he has found that the two fields are not as separate as they might seem, describing "a beautiful collision that can happen when the two are merged together."

Liu is excited about exploring both his artistic and scientific interests in college next year. Though the combination of these interests has caused tension for the senior, especially around the concept of generative artificial intelligence.

"Generative AI has had a pretty profound effect on the creative field. Some of the models are so good that it's scary, especially how quickly it is happening," Liu said. He remembered trying out the first models a few years ago that required waitlists and "made terrible art" and compared that to the rapid creation of these images today.

"I hadn't expected it," he admitted. Now he's curious how it will impact our society, especially around our ability to be creative.

Liu sees real potential for generative AI as a tool for artists, but he is skeptical of how it is often used right now. He pointed to trends like the wave of AI-generated art mimicking the style of Studio Ghibli as an example of what artists don't want or need from these tools. Studio Ghibli, the iconic Japanese animation film studio, is known for hand-drawn films layering story with beautiful art.

"I would never want a software to make all of my art like Picasso. That's not what artists care about," he said.

He is also skeptical about the technology's trajectory.



Amador Valley High School senior Jeffrey Liu captured national recognition in American Photography 42 and American Illustration 45 for his award-winning "Passing Through" series, featuring two distinct views of commuters at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. (Photos courtesy of Jeffrey Liu)

tography 42 (AP42) and American Illustration 45 (AI45). The works were juried and selected among a pool of more than 6,000 international entries spanning all ages and skill levels. The two photographs selected depicted the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station.

The award-winning photographs came out of several

between a place like downtown Pleasanton, somewhere people intentionally travel to, and BART, which exists almost entirely as a passage between other places. "No one is going to BART; they're using it to go somewhere else," he said.

That in-between quality is exactly what drew him in. "BART is diverse. There are

tographer; he is also an award-winning visual artist. In 2025, Liu's watercolor titled "Street Corner" won second place in the Youth Excellence in Arts (YEA!) competition, sponsored by the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council. In 2026, his pastel piece "Allure" took first place.

As Liu looks ahead to

KAPLANIS

(Continued from front page)

er be reinstated, so that was my concern."

Instead of program cuts, she favored a closer look at operational efficiency, such as ensuring a competitive bid process for all contracts, exercising care in reinstating administrative positions, and keeping a closer eye on how well existing programs are serving students.

While Gov. Gavin Newsom's budget revision in May raised the district's revenue projections by some \$12.3 million, Kaplanis said she remained vigilant about the financial difficulties facing the 2027-28 school year. The May revision restored some cuts, including three full-time positions.

She has drawn attention to the district's \$10 million federal Magnets School Assistance Program grant, which runs out next year, and

a \$5 million mental-health grant that ended last year.

"That's very concerning to me," she said. "At any opportunity, I bring it up, and I hold these people accountable; 'What's the status? What is our plan? What are we going to do?' And that's kind of been my consistent lens and voice in the meetings."

Kaplanis added that because her children, current LVJUSD second and fourth graders, are younger than those of some of the other trustees, she will maintain a personal connection to board decisions longer than her colleagues.

"It's different when you're making a decision, and it doesn't affect you the same way," Kaplanis said.

November's election will mark the first time that the district chooses trustees

by geographic area, having transitioned away from an at-large system during the 2024-25 school year. Area 5 includes the southeastern portion of the city.

Kaplanis and Trustee Christiaan VandenHeuvel, the area's other incumbent, have announced candidacies for the area's seat this year, choosing to run from their safe, at-large seats that expire in 2028. Newcomer Sam Phelps is also running, making Area 5 a three-way race. The winner will serve through 2030.

If either Kaplanis or VandenHeuvel loses, they will serve out the remainder of their at-large seats through 2028. If either incumbent wins, they will create a two-year, at-large vacancy that the board would fill either by appointment or through a special election.

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