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Students from around the East Bay gathered in Pleasanton Middle School on Feb. 25 for the opening day of the local school Special Olympics, followed by the basketball competition. Special Olympics, which are separate from the Olympic Games put on by the International Olympic Committee, provide athletic events for students with developmental and physical disabilities. The next local competitions will be track and field events held at Granada High School in late April or early May. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

Pleasanton School District Notes Progress And Prepares for Budget Cuts and Layoffs

District Also Considering Renting Vacant Property, Parcel Tax Measure

By Ruth Roberts

PLEASANTON — Times are tough in the Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD), but better days are coming.

That was the message conveyed by district officials during the fifth annual State of the School District address on Feb. 20 at the Firehouse Arts Center in Pleasanton.

Hosted by the nonprofit group Pleasanton Partners in Education (PPIE), the yearly gathering highlights the district's accomplishments, aspirations and goals. The event included a breakfast reception provided by the Amador Valley High School catering class and a performance by the PUSD Full Force Steppers. The Steppers are a group of PUSD students who use percussive dancing to create rhythm and sound.

Pleasanton Mayor Jack Balch, who attended the event, thanked PUSD staff for their hard work and reflected on the partnership between the city and district.

"The collaboration between the city and school district is extremely strong … we can weather any challenges set before us," Balch said. "As the proverb says, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' As your mayor, I want to thank everyone for being a part of this village. Together we are raising some remarkable individuals."

Interim Superintendent Maurice Ghysels gave the keynote address where he offset the district's challenges with its myriad accomplishments.

(See PUSD, page 6)

Pleasanton Plans 900 Homes for 88-Acre Arroyo Lago and East Lakes Projects

City to Annex Undeveloped Parcel Inside the Urban Growth Boundary

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The city plans to apply to annex 88 acres of Alameda County land east of the city with rough plans to build as many as 900 homes on them. The traffic-mitigation measures and housing mix of the area's two projects — known as Arroyo Lago and East Lakes — as well as how they will border existing homes, remained as points for future discussion between residents, project developers and the city council.

The 330 Land Co., the applicant of the Arroyo Lago project, proposes building 194 single-family homes and 49 accessory dwelling units on the 26.6 acres immediately east of the current city limits between the Ironwood neighborhood and El Charro Road. .

Another applicant, USL Pleasanton Lakes, proposes to build up to 697 single-family, townhome and apartment homes — some of which may be age restricted — in the East Lakes project on 61.6 acres east of the Arroyo Lago site. Both properties are located inside the city's urban growth boundary

Although no formal vote was taken, the city council agreed on Feb. 18 to pursue annexation, process the projects' development applications, begin work on an infrastructure financing plan, and amend the city's general plan to include the new East Pleasanton area.

City or County-Led Project

If approved by the Alameda County Local Area Formation Commission, the annexation would avoid several consequences of not annexing the property and developing the project through the county government, which the applicants have also considered.

As proposed, the county alternative would involve building and operating a new wastewater treatment facility, including spray fields to disperse treated wastewater close to the Chain of Lakes retention ponds.

Building the projects on county land outside Pleasanton, city engineer Michael Stella said, "There were some concerns voiced by Zone 7 with respect to the way that Arroyo Lago and East Lakes was proposing to discharge stormwater into Cope Lake, because of potential contaminants that could enter into

(See ANNEXATION, page 6)

Livermore

Solar Deal with Ava At Risk of Collapse

Trump Targeting Critical Tax Credit and Imposing Tariffs on China Threaten to Drive Up Costs

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — A multi-city rooftop solar project, approved earlier this month by the Livermore City Council, may become the latest casualty of the Trump administration's swath of funding cuts.

The Critical Municipal Facilities Program, led by local energy provider Ava Community Energy, looks to aggregate 30 municipal sites across the cities of Livermore, Oakland, Berkeley, Fremont, Hayward and San Leandro to create a renewable-energy portfolio in the East Bay, said J.P. Ross, Ava's vice president of local development. As currently proposed, the solar panels, installed on facilities such as libraries, city halls and corporation yards, would produce up to 5.5 megawatts of power at full capacity, equivalent to powering several thousand homes, with about 7 megawatt-hours of battery storage in total.

Ava, the default energy provider for Alameda County and the City of Tracy, leads the project.

With its participation, the City of Livermore expected to receive a 5.6% savings in energy costs, or $2.1 million over 25 years, from the power it generated.

But Green Bridge, the project developer which was to finance, install, own and operate the panel and battery systems, notified Ava shortly after Livermore's approval that it had paused work on the

(See SOLAR, page 5)



John Alexander, lead custodian for the Dublin Unitied School District, was recently named the district's Overall Classified Employee of the Year by the board of directors. (See story on page 2) (Photo courtesy of Dublin Unified School District)

McNerney Bill Would Help Forever Chemicals Cleanup

New PFAS Mitigation Fund Could Support Cleanup and Building New Wells in Pleasanton

By Larry Altman

PLEASANTON — Tri-Valley State Sen. Jerry McNerney introduced legislation last week that would create a special state fund to help local agencies and cities pay for removing toxic PFAS chemicals in their drinking water.

The proposal to establish the PFAS Mitigation Fund in the state's General Fund drew quick support from the Zone 7 Water Agency and in Pleasanton, where cleaning up the so-called "forever chemicals" from the water supply is a top concern that has already cost millions of dollars.

"Zone 7 is incurring significant capital costs to treat PFAS," said Valerie Pryor, general manager of Zone 7, which supplies treated drinking water to more than 250,000 residents in Pleasanton, Livermore and Dublin, and a part of San Ramon. "We are partially offsetting these costs with $17 million in grant funding, but the remaining costs are borne by the water ratepayers. Any additional funding such as proposed in SB 454 would lessen the financial burden on our ratepayers."

Pleasanton had to close all three of its wells in 2019 due to PFAS contamination and now buys its drinking water from Zone 7.

This bill, SB 454, would authorize the State Water Resources Control Board to seek out state, federal and private funding, including from unspecified corporations that want

(See PFAS, page 7)



Actors Aaron Bobertz as Prince John and Peter Grayson as Robin Hood rehearse a fight scene for the Sunol Repertory Theatre's production of "Robin Hood & His Merry Men." The show starts March 8. This year includes a matinee performance. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

Sunol Rep Brings Comedy to a Classic Tale

Village Theater's 42nd Season Features "Robin Hood," Matinee Showing

By Christina Cavallaro

SUNOL — The 42nd season of the Sunol Repertory Theatre (SRT) coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Sunol Glen School, which the nonprofit thespian group supports with the proceeds from each year's production.

The group has donated on average $10,000 a year from its Friday and Saturday performances that span a two-week period each winter.

"The money goes to support the arts program. Anything art-related, that's kind of what it's earmarked for, like music, and obviously art directly," said Chris Bobertz, who is co-directing this season's retelling of the Robin Hood tale with Meredith Sarboraria. This is the first time both have directed a production for the company.

Bobertz said SRT is closing in on the $300,000 donation mark over the past 42 years of its giving to the historic school, which serves K-8th grades and was built in 1925.

"I can't necessarily say that it (the arts programming) wouldn't exist without it, but it would be drastically different," he said.

On this year's opening night, Saturday, March 8, audiences will experience SRT's take on "Robin Hood & His Merry Men," by Arizona playwright Richard Gremel.

Actor and director Klay Kunkel, who's been involved with the annual productions since 2001, brought the directing duo on board this year.

"He worked his magic to sort of get us together," Sarboraria said. "And I'm just obsessed with comedy, and Chris (Bobertz) is a standup comedian and has a great sense of what's funny." She joked that she's always been an armchair director

(See SUNOL REP, page 7)

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PET OF THE WEEK



NAOMI

Naomi is the supermodel of snuggles, serving effortless elegance and flawless flops in a bid for scratches. With her signature chirps and runway-ready cuddles, she's a reserved queen who saves her best poses (and purrs) for her inner circle. Ready to be part of her exclusive fan club? Call Valley Humane at (925) 426-8656 to arrange a meet & greet, or email info@valleyhumane.org to start the adoption process. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

Independent Analysis Backs Pleasanton's Fiscal Forecast

By David Jen

A third-party analysis of Pleasanton's finances has confirmed the city's forecast methods and short-term projections. The analysis also identified ways to improve the city's long-term planning and communication practices with the public.

Mayor Jack Balch proposed the analysis on Jan. 9 in response to public distrust in the city's financial forecasts, which project an annual city deficit of about $13 million beginning next fiscal year. Balch said that the city needs to rebuild trust as it develops its next two-year budget, which the city council will adopt in June.

Opponents of Measure PP, the ballot measure that failed to increase the city's sales tax from 10.25% to 10.75% last November, repeatedly questioned the city's assumptions in forming its deficit projection.

The third-party peer review, prepared by Eide Bailly LLP and released on Feb. 4, supports the city staff's conclusions.

"Although the city's work is not yet complete to prepare a comprehensive financial forecast, based on the information available, we believe that the additional work to be completed in the near-term will only further illustrate that the city's resources are constrained and that its long-term funding needs are significant," the report said.

The report also included recommendations that the city focus on its short-term deficits and critical infrastructure assessments first, develop a plan to draw down its pension trust funds, and adopt a new reserve policy based on needs instead of minimum balances.

Councilmember Julie Testa, the sole councilmember who voted against conducting the latest analysis last month, said the report sent a message of continued distrust in city staff instead of working to mend it.

"Far too much time, money and opportunity to pass the needed sales tax measure has been lost countering a heavily funded, politically motivated disinformation campaign," said Testa. "The more than $30,000 cost of this independent report should not have been needed to validate the work done by our professional staff and experts, but the outcome has value if the results restore our residents' trust in city staff."

Vice Mayor Jeff Nibert, who along with Testa endorsed Measure PP, also called the report worthwhile if it brings more of the public along with the current budget process.

"Establishing the trust of the city's residents is not a wasted cost," said Nibert. "The majority of voters voted no on Measure PP. Many were influenced by the No on PP campaign, which continued to sow distrust of the city's financial forecast and the assumptions underpinning it."

"Going forward," he continued, "our residents must be able to trust the forecast. Without a reliable independent review, many residents would continue to distrust the next budget. … It's reassuring that this highly respected firm has validated the city's forecast and best practices."

Balch declined to comment on the report until he first followed up on several points.

The city council's audit committee — composed of Balch and Councilmember Craig Eicher — was expected on Feb. 18 to share its comments and recommendations with the full council on the city's annual audit of its financial transactions and internal controls, prepared by independent auditors The Pun Group.

Demonstrations Planned Around Tri-Valley

Several activist groups are planning demonstrations around the Tri-Valley in the coming week in protest of various decisions by the federal government.

A protest against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is planned for Saturday, March 1, at noon at the corner of Gleason and Arnold Road in Dublin. The demonstration is to protest plans for ICE to re-open the Dublin Federal Correctional Institution to house immigrants rounded up for deportation. The action is being sponsored by the Dublin Prison Solidarity Coalition, the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice and other groups.

Also at noon on March 1, the national network TeslaTakedown.com is calling for protests against Elon Musk's massive cuts to the federal government at Tesla showrooms nationwide, including the Bay Area. A demonstration was held at the Dublin dealership at 6701 Amador Plaza Road on Feb. 15.

Livermore Advocates for Public Education is also planning a demonstration at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4 at Stockmen's Park in downtown Livermore to protest plans by President Trump and Musk to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the U.S. Department of Education used to fund public schools. The group also intends to protest policies that hurt LGBTQ+ and undocumented children or family members. The rally coincides with the grassroots group 50501's call for a National Day of Protest in all 50 states on March 4.

Longtime Dublin Schools Custodian Is Awarded for Above-and-Beyond Service

By Ruth Roberts

John Alexander, lead custodian of the Dublin Unified School District (DUSD), starts his workday before most people even wake up. So, when the longtime employee was called into the Amador Elementary School office early one morning to find a group of teachers and staff on hand, he rightly suspected something was up.

"I thought 'What's going on?' and then people started congratulating me and then they told me," said Alexander. "I broke down a little bit, to be honest, I was very shocked."

Alexander has been named the district's Overall Classified Employee of the Year, and one of five individuals named DUSD's 2024-2025 Classified Employee of the Year. Both honors were bestowed upon him by his coworkers and peers.

"John Alexander exemplifies dedication, hard work and an unwavering commitment to the students and staff at Amador Elementary," said Tim Leal, DUSD's director of maintenance and operations. "For over a decade, he has gone above and beyond to ensure that our schools are clean, safe and welcoming environments for learning. His positive attitude and willingness to help in any situation make him a beloved member of our school community."

For Alexander, taking care of the district and its students is all in a day's work.

"Honestly, the kids are why I am here," said Alexander, who grew up in Dublin and attended DUSD schools, but now calls Livermore home. "They are the reason I am there at the front gate every day welcoming them … their big smiles warm my heart and knowing that I can make an impact in some way, is why I do it."

Outside of the district, Alexander is a proud uncle to 'tons' of nieces and nephews, but he also considers his co-workers part of his extended clan.

"We are all like a small, close-knit family here," said Alexander. "We take care of each other and have each other's backs. It's an honor to work with them every day."

Alexander will be recognized along with four coworkers during a celebration on March 15 at the Shannon Center in Dublin. They will also all be entered into the Alameda County Office of Education Classified Employee of the Year competition. The winners of the county competition will be announced in late spring.

The other four 2024-2025 DUSD Classified Employees of the Year honorees include Will Crozier (in the district's Food and Nutrition department), Karen Chamberlain (security), Minoo Etemadnia (paraprofessionals), and Tabitha Leni (clerical).

"Our classified staff are the unsung heroes of our district, playing an essential role in every aspect of our schools," said Chris D. Funk, DUSD superintendent. "From maintenance and nutrition to health services, technology, administrative support and finance, these dedicated professionals ensure that our schools remain safe, functional, and welcoming spaces for students to learn and thrive. Their hard work and expertise are the foundation that allows our educators to focus on teaching and our students to focus on learning. We are deeply grateful for their contributions."

Belk Finishes Second in District Oratorical Competition

Megan Belk, a senior at Livermore High School, finished second in the American Legion District 10 oratorical contest, held Saturday, Feb. 8, at the Veterans Memorial Building in Livermore.

Belk was sponsored by American Legion Post 47 in Livermore. District 10 encompasses 11 American Legion Posts in the East Bay area.



Student winners (shown above) with Post 47 Commanders, Roy Warner, Megan Belk, Kurt Winkowski and Sylvie Karlstand. (Photo courtesy of Livermore American Legion District 10)

In January, Belk finished first in the Post 47 oratorial competition, receiving $250, to advance to the district competition. She received $150 for finishing second in the district competition.

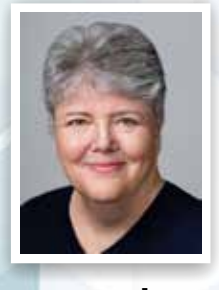
This year, contestants were asked to address an aspect of Article 7 of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees the right to a trial by jury in civil cases.

First place in the district competition went to Sylvie Karlstand, a student at Saint Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda, who will now advance to the California American Legion Area 2 competition in Palo Alto on March 8.

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Goodness Village Expands Its Property

By Ruth Roberts

Good things are coming to Goodness Village.

In a unanimous vote on Feb. 18, the Livermore Planning Commission approved the construction of a community center on the Crosswinds Church property in Livermore, which the group has called home since 2021.

"Goodness Village thus far has shown a good track record of service and support, which is invaluable to the city's goal of providing housing opportunities for all people," according to the staff report.

The nonprofit organization assists low-income residents with housing and services such as health care, employment, education, counseling and crisis care. The residents of live in 28, single-story tiny houses. The 160-square-foot homes all have restrooms, showers, kitchenettes, HVAC and a front porch.

"We are so grateful to the (planning) commission for the kind, loving support of this project," said Kim Curtis, executive director of Goodness Village.

The proposed community center is a two-story, 7,126-square-foot facility that will accommodate common dining and meeting areas and a space for art and other creative endeavors. The center will have an elevator, and a large dining room and cooking space on the ground floor to be accessible to all residents. There will also be a library and fitness center with spaces for classes such as yoga and meditation.

"The library is a tribute to one of our neighbors who passed away," Curtis said. "We wanted to create a cozy nook area for her because she loved her books and we loved her. The fitness center and mindfulness space are for everyone's physical health and wellness but some people will also be able to use it for hypnotherapy sessions … it will be an amazing space that keeps us all moving and healthy."

And then there is the pièce de resistance: expanded laundry rooms and staff offices.

"For the past three and a half years residents have been sharing a laundry room with one washer and one dryer and they have been handling it with great grace," said Curtis, who added they are hoping for four sets of new washers and dryers for the laundry room. "This is something that is much needed."

Since the opening of Goodness Village nearly five years ago, its staff has been spread out in temporary modules and in a 120-year-old house on the property that serves as an on-the-fly spot for staff gatherings and client meetings. Curtis says she is looking forward to having a single space where staff can be together and where client meetings can be conducted with more privacy.

"We are so excited about all of this (the center) but one of the really great things is that we will be connected now as a team," said Curtis of the proposed offices. "It will be nice to all be together in a bigger space so that we can start having more supportive, regular meeting places. This serves not just staff but our clients as well."

While the full cost of the project is yet to be determined, Curtis said funding has been secured through prior commitments from former state Senator Steve Glazer's office, the software company Workday and the religious organization Unitarian Universalists who are providing the much-needed additional washers and dryers for the community center.

Curtis added that they hope to begin construction on the community center in the spring with completion, weather permitting, by Christmas.

"It would be great to celebrate the holidays in our new space," said Curtis. "We'll see, I think, hope, we can do it."



An artist's rendering of the proposed Goodness Village community center in Livermore.
(Rendering courtesy of KTGY Group Inc.)

Annual Barrel Tasting Weekend Returns in March

Livermore Valley Wine Country (LVWC) will host its annual Barrel Tasting Weekend from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 22, and Sunday, March 23.

LVWC is a nonprofit marketing organization for Livermore Valley wineries and affiliated businesses.

Throughout the weekend, wineries will be hosting live musical performances by local artists, including Sugar Bear, Jim Remy, Love Quinn, Carman Hammond, and jazz performances by Las Positas College students.

Several wineries will also be offering "futures purchasing," allowing guests to buy barrel wines at a discounted rate before they are bottled.

Wineries will be hosting their own ticketed events, with prices ranging from $15 to $30 per person.

Participating wineries include 3 Steves Winery, Arroyo Cellars, Bent Creek, Caddis Winery, Charles R Vineyards, Concannon, Dante Robere Vineyards, Darcie Kent, Fenestra, Favalora, Free Range Flower, JMC Cellars, Longevity, McGrail Vineyards and Winery, Omega Road, Page Mill Winery, Pruett Farms, Retzlaff Winery, Rios-Lovell, Rosa Fierro Cellars, and Wood Family Vineyards.

For a full schedule of events, and to purchase tickets, go to lvwine.org/events.

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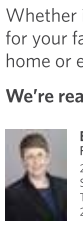
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EDITORIAL

Our Leaders Need to Lead, But We Need to Have Their Backs

Something is shifting in the United States. People are starting to wake up to the fact that what is happening in Washington, D.C., is not normal, and not good. And some are telling their representatives in government that they need to change direction.

Across the country, a series of demonstrations have taken place in public venues, in town halls held by elected officials, and even at Tesla dealerships. In the Tri-Valley, students from immigrant families marched through downtown Livermore protesting ICE's plans to deport people on Feb. 11. Another event took place at the Dublin Tesla showroom on Feb. 15, calling out Elon Musk's taking a chainsaw to the federal government.

At least three more demonstrations are expected for this week in the Tri-Valley, the first time that's happened. (See page 2.) On March 1, a protest is planned near FCI Dublin because there are fears ICE will use the shuttered and dangerously decrepit prison to detain immigrants. On March 4, Livermore Advocates for Public Education plans an event in Stockmen's Park to protest the attempt of President Trump and Musk to eliminate the Department of Education and its funding for public schools. And the "Takedown Tesla" protest will return to the Dublin dealership on March 4.

People concerned about the future of our country should consider attending. Our right to peaceably assemble is enshrined in the Constitution.

In contrast, Trump believes he doesn't have to abide by our founding document. That's been made clear by numerous actions Trump and Musk have taken since the inauguration, steps that are rapidly transforming the United States into an autocracy.

This has nothing to do with cutting costs: Mass firings are about replacing apolitical civil servants with loyalists. Trump has installed unqualified political operatives in many top posts, including the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Directorate of National Intelligence and the Department of Defense. Trump has also started ignoring court orders that have sought to halt some of his illegal executive actions.

He recently purged many of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and fired the Judge Advocates General — the military attorneys who until now have prosecuted war crimes and advised the armed forces on when and how to use force. They are the ones who could block the military from being illegally deployed against civilians — and Trump himself has previously threatened to send the military into U.S. cities, which is prohibited under current law.

Autocrats seizing control of the military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies aren't looking for cost savings; they're planning to use force to get their way.

When the people take to the streets, they can call attention to abuses of power that lead to a dictatorship.

In doing so, we also bolster our elected representatives in the state legislature and in Congress. They still have their hands on the levers of power, should they choose to use them. We're seeing some forward momentum, but so far opposition to Trump's agenda has largely come across as tepid.

On the other hand, some legislators, including the Tri-Valley's U.S. representatives, Eric Swalwell and Mark DeSaulnier, have held town halls recently in their districts. As Democrats, Swalwell and DeSaulnier are in the minority and thus have limited power to enact legislation. But they can still stand up and speak out in Congress, and in future public events.

The same goes for our local representatives in Sacramento: Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and Liz Ortega, and Senator Jerry McNerney. The state government will be the first line of defense in California against the abuses of an administration unbound by the rule of law or court orders.

But our representatives need to know what we want from them in order to advocate for it. They also need to know that if they stand up, we will have their backs.

We must present a united front against an autocratic administration. When we take to the streets, our representatives are more likely to step up to the podium and take action in the halls of power, while they still can.

MAILBOX

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Don't Forget Iwo Jima
Richard Andrews, Livermore

February 19th was the 80th anniversary of the invasion of Iwo Jima. A godawful experience for those involved as it was the only battle in the Pacific where America lost more men than did the defenders. The next battle, Okinawa, continued to show the brutality of the Bushido mentality of the Japanese Imperial military, as was displayed throughout the whole war.

Kamakazi planes and Banzai charge everywhere. The willingness (or forced) to die for the Emperor was displayed without end. Suicides instead of peaceful surrender were the order of the day. Okinawa saw over 100,000 defending soldiers and 150,000 civilians dying. And the Allies lost almost 12,500 with another 37,000 wounded. All for the glory of leadership worship.

I do not like what we had to do at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But looking at the history of what Hirohito demanded, I think Pres. Truman did the right thing. It was horrible, and we are constantly reminded of what nuclear bombs can do. But do not forget the alternative of 1,000,000 Allied troops expected to die, and 5 times that on the defenders' side, in the Japanese invasion which is often not even brought up.

Bless all our veterans who gave so bravely, and are now being dishonored by our draft dodging leader in word and deed.

America is Slowly Recovering from Biden's Nightmare
David Ott, Pleasanton

America is still being impacted by the Biden inflation from the past four years. Towards the end of last year, the Federal Reserve and Biden made inflation worse by lowering interest rates prematurely to help Biden's reelection, and then once Biden lost the election it has been reported that he spent another $500B between Nov–Jan 2025 on waste, fraud and abuse which caused more inflation. Once President Trump's policies are implemented, the inflation will subside.

President Trump has created one of the qualified cabinets in history, and with the additional focus by DOGE, America will stop the waste, fraud and abuse of the billions of dollars that has been a burden to the American taxpayer. The Democrats should be partnering with the Republicans to find solutions to stop the waste, fraud and abuse and improve our country. Instead, the dems refuse to work with the Republicans and all they do is make personal threats and encourage their base to resist. Has there been one suggested solution or compromise from the dems? No, not one. I urge all Americans to work together to help find solutions to improve our country, rather than cause more problems and division.

Another pending improvement is for the elimination of the federal Department of Education. The plan to return the control of education back to the states would have the greatest positive effect for the children and the school districts across America by the additional funding that would be available. 40% of the current funding is consumed by this federal department with no direct benefit to the students. The education programs that are in our schools today could be enhanced with the additional funding that would be available by eliminating the waste, fraud and abuse of the Department of Education.

Now that the border is secure, the process of deporting the worst illegal criminals is in process. These criminals have committed rape, murder, human trafficking, drug trafficking and gang violence in our country. Some dem controlled cities and states are protecting these criminals by illegally resisting the federal ICE laws which places American citizens in danger. These cities and states run the risk of losing their federal funds by breaking the federal ICE laws.

President Trump and his administration have the commonsense policies that will restore the peace, security and democracy to our country. Thank God.

Welcome to Trump World
Rosario Milelli, Pleaanton

Some thoughts on Trump's first weeks:

Promised peace in Ukraine in one day – nope

Lower egg prices – nope, up by 40%

Demanded lower interest rates — nope, higher now

Tariffs, Tariffs, Tariffs — Trump is promising huge increases in tariffs, which, we the consumer will ultimately pay for. It is a double hit; imported goods price increases and similar U.S. sourced goods will increase because they can. In addition, foreign retaliation will kill sales of U.S. goods overseas. Especially impacted will be farmers who will have to be bailed out by Trump. There will be pain, under the best of circumstances; it will take years for manufacturers to tool up to produce domestically. Also, why does Trump want to piss off so many of our long-term friends and trading partners?

Musk should recommend disbanding Congress will provide huge savings. They are not even a rubber stamp to Trump who rules by executive order, in an acknowledged lawless manner. Besides, most are pretty much spineless cowards who somehow placed the worst possible people in critical cabinet positions. Imagine Kennedy as head of HHS? Patel head of FBI?

Trump, seemingly controlled by Putin, echoing Russian propaganda, offering much of Ukraine to Russia? Hell bent to kill NATO? Why is Trump acceding to Putin, our enemy, waging war on the West? Who could imagine Trump saying, "Ukraine started the war"; is it dementia, something he ingested, or does Putin have something on him ?

Tax cuts, $36 trillion in debt and Trump wants to increase debt by $5 trillion. Number one priority.

Musk, if successful, cutting $2 trillion from the budget will reduce GDP by $3 trillion and increase unemployment by 19 million jobs. A catastrophe in the making. Also, Musk, the richest person on the planet, devastating the USAID program will result in thousands of the poorest dying. Heartless at best.

Pardons for those that mercilessly beat those protecting the capital, protecting the spineless Senators and Representatives still serving. Pretty unthinkable.

As stated in a previous letter, per John Adams, "There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself." We are now there.

The New Regime
Robert Yates, Livermore

I'm loving that new regime in Washington DC. My heroes! So boldly going where no man has gone before. Like a really good Three Stooges episode, break it up and tear it down. Let's tell everyone we 're going to make America great again, because that sounds good, right? The first thing we'll do, see, is get rid of all the namby-pamby Constitutionalists that might get in our way. Don't worry, the Supremes have got our back. And as our Stable Genius Greatest President Ever reminded us, "He who saves his country does not violate any law." We'll let tantruming toddlers into all the computer systems. Hahaha! Take that, you libtards! And who needs democratic allies when our Dear Leader is good buds (wink wink) with that handsome Kim Jong Un and KGBnik Vladimir Putin? So macho! So much winning! And hey, those pointy-headed pencil-neck scientists and so-called "doctors" gotta learn a lesson or two. While we're at it, let's can all the people in charge of improving our nuclear weapons. But hey, don't feel bad for them. I think maybe their expertise might be welcome elsewhere. Go, team MAGA!! Yay!!

As the Good Book says, "For they have sowen the winde, and they shall reap the whirlwinde." Hosea 8:7.

Derail this Turkey of a Train
Paul Stone, Dublin

All of us at some time in our lives have had to cut our losses on a pet project or investment that has somehow soured. We take our lumps and hopefully learn something in the process.

It is high time, past time, to pull the plug on California's so-called high speed rail project. Let us staunch the financial hemorrhaging now and return the paved over land to something useful like, oh, I don't know, growing food.

Mr. President, I beg you, don't give California one penny (well, I guess you can't do that now anyhow) not one nickel to fund this travesty of a train. Sic the dogemeister (or maybe Kristi Noem) on this dog, would'ja?

Angry at Swalwell
John Lahommedieu, Dublin

Eric Swalwell blamed president Trump for the airliner crash in Toronto! Now mind you, the investigation is still underway with no known cause for the crash at this time. Yet the ignorant self-serving corrupt Swalwell lays blame at Trump? How irresponsible and damaging that is! This Swalwell who has done little to nothing for his district other than lining his own pockets at the expense of the American working men and women spouts off on something he has no knowledge about. I want the Republican house and senate to censure Swalwell and begin proceedings on his impeachment from Congress immediately. Swalwell is a parasite, a cancer to society, and an embarrassment to all in his district and to the U.S. Congress. Remove the parasite Swalwell and in time he will be brough up on charges of corruption and payola while in office.

Democracy is Winning!
David Marco, Livermore

On Nov. 4, Americans clearly voiced their opinions at the ballot box, rejecting the policies of the last four years and voting for a return to constitutional government. The screams from the Independent's editorial board and their front page stories are very sad. The Democrats and leftists lost the election, fair and square. By every poll, the vast majority of Americans are thrilled that DOGE is uncovering and eliminating massive fraud and waste. USAID is a sham – in many places funding terrorism. Babies are not dying because of its being shut down, and legitimate projects are being transferred to the State Department. I'm surprised that anyone is opposed to uncovering the massive waste that's being discovered as our nation is on the verge of insolvency. And it's been from both parties. Apparently unelected bureaucrats write the details of the budget bills. They're typically 1,500 pages, and are given to legislators the night before they are to vote on it. Then they have "battles" over what's in the bill.

The courts have been and will continue to vindicate Trump's positions. The judges that oppose him have a deep and obvious bias. And the court that convicted him was a sham. He's been careful to follow the constitution while Biden and previous regimes have not. The data on Hunter's laptop shows they've been taking millions from China and other countries. That's why the Dems and their media allies have fought so hard to hide it. We'll see more evidence of that in the days ahead.

We had evidence that the CIA was censoring the content of Twitter. Zuckerberg said they were coercing FaceBook to censor views they didn't like. We had a president clearly suffering from dementia who was not in charge. Yet, this was hidden from us by a corrupt media. They never asked substantive questions of Biden and his people, while

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LVO to Present Mozart's Famed Two-Act Opera 'Don Giovanni'

Livermore Valley Opera (LVO) will present Mozart's "Don Giovanni" at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore over the first two weekends in March.

Considered one of the greatest operas of all time, "Don Giovanni" is a two-act retelling of the centuries-old Don Juan legend about an arrogant young nobleman who devotes his life to seducing women.

Accompanied by his reluctant servant Leporello, the libertine Don Giovanni pursues rich and poor alike until his dramatic downfall.

The opera is "brimming with beautiful music, luscious visuals and an amazing cast that are a thrill to hear," said stage director Robert Herriot. "But perhaps the best part is the story ... a tale of one man whose lust for women and power comes to a chilling end with his descent into hell."

Titus Muzi III, making his LVO debut, will play the title role of Don Giovanni.

Samuel Weiser, who played Dr. Dulcamara in LVO's 2022 production of "The Elixir of Love," returns in the role of Leporello, serving as Giovanni's moral compass and providing comic relief.

Two more LVO newcomers, Meryl Dominguez and Cara Gabrielson, will play Donna Anna and Donna Elvira, two of the noblewomen seduced by Giovanni.

Donna Anna is a woman of strength and resilience seeking justice and revenge, making her one of the more emotionally charged characters in Mozart's masterpiece. Donna Elvira, another of the opera's most compelling characters, is torn between her feelings of love and fury.

Phoebe Chee returns in the role of Zerlina, a loyal and flirtatious peasant woman who also catches Giovanni's lascivious eye.

The opera will be sung in Italian with English supertitles. Performances will be accompanied by the Livermore Valley Opera Orchestra.

Opening night will be 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 1, with matinees scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 2, Saturday, March 8, and Sunday, March 9.

Tickets are available at livermorevalleyarts.org or by calling 925-373-6800. The cost is $25.

Tickets include a pre-performance talk one hour prior to curtain time. LVO will host an artist reception in the Bankhead lobby following each performance.

LVO will also host an opening-night dinner at Uncle Yu's and the Vineyards. Tickets to the four-course dinner are $130. For more information, go to livermorearts.org.



Rob Herriot (third from left), stage director for LVOpera's production of "Don Giovanni," critiques the performances of (left to right) Joseph Calzada, Phoebe Chee, and Titus Muzi III, on Feb. 23. (Photo courtesy of LVOpera)

SOLAR

(Continued from front page)

project because of the upheaval in the federal funding landscape. Ava and Livermore are also trying to reevaluate the project's viability given changes to tax credits, grants, tariffs and labor availability.

"We don't know," said Livermore Councilmember and Ava Board Member Ben Barrientos. " Are there going to be tariffs or are there not going to be tariffs? Do we budget for this or do we budget for that?"

Ava and its partner cities must now consider what form the project would take if Green Bridge walks away completely, which Ava anticipates.

Uncertainty around the federal Investment Tax Credit program, a cost savings of up to 30% upon which the $45 million project depends, opens the project to new risks, as the credits can only be claimed once the installations are complete in an estimated 12 to 18 months from now.

"It's something that the Trump administration issued an executive order trying to repeal," said Ross. "That's not feasible. It's law. It's legislation, so it cannot be overturned by executive order, but there has been movement within some of the congressional bodies to overturn the tax credit. … We've had challenges contacting the Department of Energy staff that we've been in contact with (to) try to receive those tax credits."

The Trump administration's new 10% tariffs on all products from China have also driven supply costs up, including those for batteries, steel and aluminum.

"Some of these tariffs are already implemented; we're evaluating the cost impacts of these tariffs," said Ross. "But even more challenging is the uncertainty. We don't know when and by how much new tariffs may be implemented and what the impact to the project cost may be."

Barrientos said that Ava and city staff were also looking at what could be built soon before more tariffs kick in.

The project's installations must receive their final inspection by April 15, 2026 in order to enjoy the higher compensation rates available under an outgoing energy-metering program. California's third-generation Net Energy Metering (NEM 3.0) program went into effect in 2023, lowering the amount paid to rooftop-solar owners for the power they generate. But projects applied for prior to that deadline were to be grandfathered into the older, higher-paying program, if built before next year's deadline.

"The risk and uncertainty have increased significantly over the last several months impacting the viability of this portfolio achieving NEM 2.0," according to a presentation from Ross. He added that with many solar projects under the same deadline, "qualified labor may be in short supply through the end of this calendar year into early next calendar year."

To increase the chances of completion before the April 15, 2026, deadline, Ross said Ava is now considering reducing the portfolio size. Ava staff will also review a scenario in which the community aggregator rather than Green Bridge would own the solar panels and batteries. Such a move, according to Ross, would increase the project's flexibility, but also shift the financial risks to Ava.

Ava's March board meeting will include a presentation that evaluates the project's worst-case scenario of no Investment Tax Credit, raised tariffs and a loss of $2 million in previously awarded federal grants.

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

they relentlessly attacked his opponents. And now we found out that the AP, Politico, and other "news" outlets were secretly funded by the government, mostly through USAID. No wonder they were staunch advocates of the inaccuracies of the last administration.

We now have a president with almost daily news conferences and meaningful exchanges with the media. And the media that most Americans listen to is now part of the press corp. Government transparency is at a new high. Democracy in America is being revived!

Injustice Thrives in Our Silence — Take Action

Kyoko Takayama, Livermore

I am not a white male U.S. citizen, so I am scared and angry. When I am angry, I organize, and am happy to tell you that so do many others. Don't sit in front of TV and get upset. Yelling at the TV is not going to change anything.

You can join protests and rallies right in the Tri-Valley area. The next one is coming up on Saturday, March 1, noon, at Dublin Tesla. Sign up at trivalley.rocks/StopMusk1. There will be more coming up.

You can check out the local groups. There are many grassroots groups in the Tri-Valley and you can find them at go-hub.us. If your group is not listed, please fill out the form at trivalley.rocks/tvgo2.

Finally, you can put our representatives' contact information in your phone: U.S. Senators Padilla (202) 224-3553 and Schiff (202) 224-3841, and Rep Swalwell (202) 225-5065, and start telling them to fight with everything they've got. Republicans have a federal trifecta, and they are responsible for what happens in our country for the next two years. They need no help from Democrats, but we want our representatives to fight, stop funding cuts on our safety net, and kick Musk out of the White House. They have to try and so do we. Speak up and ask — we must if we don't like what we see. Injustice thrives in our silence.

Laws Matter

David Jonas, Livermore

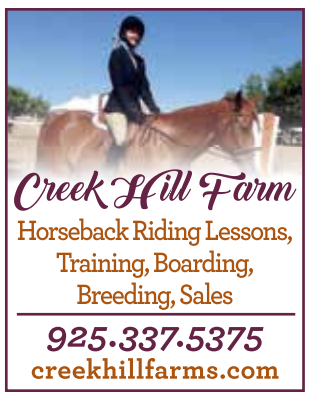
The authors of four recent letters to the editor blame City Council for granting waivers and exceptions to the Cornerstone housing development, betraying their viewpoint that, when it comes to Cornerstone, laws don't matter. Specifically, the authors believe Livermore is exempt from the California Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (SB330).

I encourage anyone who wishes to understand SB330's impact on the Cornerstone project, and the consequences the city would have faced by voting against the project, to read the law's text, analyses of the law, the Planning Commission Staff Memorandum (SB330 analysis begins on page 20), and accounts of failed attempts by San Francisco, Goleta, and Los Angeles to reject approved SB330 projects.

Sadly, those community members who advocate for lawbreaking have an ally in Councilmember Barrientos. By voting against Cornerstone, and for at least the second time since he took office, Barrientos blatantly violated his basic obligation to vote according to the law rather than his personal biases.

Fortunately, Barrientos

(See MAILBOX, page 6)







THE Independent

We're Hiring: Managing Editor

We're looking for an individual who will be able to provide editorial leadership for our weekly newspaper. This is a full-time position that requires solid journalistic skills and ethics, a creative approach to story generation, and the ability to lead a team in a deadline-driven workplace. Some night or weekend work is required to keep pace in a dynamic news environment.

The ideal candidate will possess a blend of leadership and investigative fervor, with a deep-seated love of community-focused journalism.

Duties:

- Develop and assign stories to a stable of freelance writers and staff
- Edit stories for AP style and readability
- Write editorials and news stories
- Coordinate with writers and photographers for imagery and event coverage
- Maintain an active planning calendar for upcoming events
- Maintain and grow a network of freelance reporters and contributors to ensure coverage of key beats
- Assist with page layout and proofreading

Qualifications:

- A seasoned journalist with a strong ethical and moral code
- Editing experience, including AP-style copy editing
- Management experience with professional communication skills, both within the community and among staff
- Organized and adept at juggling multiple projects simultaneously, including publishing the current paper while simultaneously planning future editions
- Excellent time management skills
- The ideal candidate would also benefit from a keen eye for effective imagery and page layout, curiosity about everything from land use law to nuclear physics, a drive to hold the powerful to account and a passion for accurate and fair news coverage.

To apply, send a resumé, a cover letter detailing your experience and interest in the position, and a few recent examples of your writing and editing (in PDF format) to jobs@independentnews.com.



Livermore Laboratory Raises Over $82K For Southern California Fire Relief

By Jessica Zimmer

This winter, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) employees and a matching commitment from Lawrence Livermore National Security LLC (LLNS), the company that manages the lab, raised $82,101.38 for Southern California residents impacted by the series of catastrophic wildfires that occurred in January 2025.

The voluntary giving campaign, which ran from Jan. 16 to Feb. 14, benefited 21 charities that actively responded to the immediate aftermath of the fires in the Los Angeles area. Charities receiving funds from LLNL and LLNS's giving account established with Fidelity Charitable included the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity-Greater Los Angeles, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, and United Policyholders, a national nonprofit for that provides information to insurance policyholders.

Nonprofits' response to the disaster have involved a wide range of actions. For example, American Red Cross distributed relief supplies such as personal protective equipment, plus clean-up kits, snacks, and water to residents whose homes were damaged. Habitat for Humanity assisted with rebuilding and relocation, including temporary rental and mortgage assistance, for families with uninhabitable homes.

The total amount received involved 297 donations from 189 donors, with approximately 2% of lab employees participating. Employees raised $41,400.69, which was matched dollar-for-dollar by LLNS, which is managed by entities that relate to the lab's national security mission. Among these are the University of California, the Texas A&M University system, government and commercial services contractor Amentum, engineering corporation Bechtel National Inc., and BWXT Technologies Inc.'s Government Group, which provides nuclear components and fuel to the U.S. government. Battelle Memorial Institute, a private nonprofit that is an applied science and technology company, is also a subcontractor.

The monies in LLNS's matching fund come from the company's charitable contributions budget. This is part of a $300,000 reserve set aside from a larger $1.3 million pool created through LLNL's Helping Others More Effectively (HOME) campaign, an annual payroll deduction program for employees.

That $300,000 reserve is set aside for other charitable giving match donations to improve employee engagement in these efforts, said Kellie Glaser, the program manager for employee engagement and the HOME program.

LLNL prioritized the cause of the Southern California wildfires to maximize the impact of the giving. LLNL employees were allowed to choose the vetted charities in the giving account to which they wanted to donate.

"The LLNL community came together to demonstrate solidarity and support for those impacted by the fires," said LLNL Principal Deputy Director Carolyn Zerkle. "The funds raised will provide essential aid and resources to help rebuild lives and communities in Southern California."

As of late February, 955 employees, about 10% of LLNL's workforce, have donated to the 2025 HOME campaign, including the payroll deduction charitable giving campaign and the Southern California fire relief campaign. The wildfire-specific campaign has had the effect of increasing the number of employees who have donated through HOME. Of the 189 donors who participated in this specific campaign, 94 employees had not contributed to the 2024 HOME campaign. The lab had not previously run a single-issue donation drive.

"We have not done this in the past. We are just now starting to track this data and the level of engagement in the different types of donation campaigns," Glaser said.

LLNL believes reaching employees in new ways will help expand the organization's charitable impact and encourage year-round giving. Every year, Lab employees and LLNS donate over $3 million to local nonprofits. Hundreds of employees also donate time to local service agencies.

"LLNL extends its gratitude to all employees who participated in this important initiative. We are excited to see how our collective efforts will continue to make a positive impact in future initiatives," said Zerkle.



Spring is sprung! Daffodils were in bloom on Feb. 19 in Pleasanton's Kottinger Park. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

ANNEXATION

(Continued from front page)

the groundwater aquifer system that we rely on for drinking water."

But if developed within the city, the projects would connect to Pleasanton's municipal water and sewer system and eliminate the need for additional treatment facilities.

A city report also estimated $778,000 in annual costs to the city if the projects were developed through the county, resulting from the new residents burdening city resources. Community Development Director Ellen Clark said that although the residents would be "technically unincorporated Alameda County, (they would) take advantage of city services, our library, our parks and certain emergency services, all of which will incur costs to the City of Pleasanton without seeing a commensurate increase in property taxes."

If annexed, the developments are expected to instead net the city $903,000 in annual income, with revenues coming mainly from property taxes, according to a city report.

Both residents and council members at last week's meeting supported annexation.

Concern About Age Restrictions

"I think it would be best for the communities and for Pleasanton to be able to have our caring hands on what happens and goes forward," said Councilmember Julie Testa, who, although supportive of annexation, also raised concerns about a shift from a previous proposal that would have made the East Lakes project a senior-only development. The developer changed the project to mixed-use after hearing community feedback that wasn't supportive of exclusively senior housing.

"I absolutely would hope that we would revisit the possibility of 100% age-restricted," she said, citing the additional traffic of mixed-use housing as reasons to favor senior housing.

Testa also said that mixed-use developments generate more traffic than age-restricted housing, and that would cause negative impacts on the city.

The other council members welcomed the change to mixed-use development.

"I really do like where it's going with a variety of housing types," said Mayor Jack Balch. "We have to have a variety of housing types in this community to provide housing for every stage of life, for every family that might need something different from a single-family home."

Councilmember Craig Eicher said, "It's important to have opportunities for new homebuyers in our community and have housing that reflects that. … I'm not convinced age-restricted housing is the best direction to go."

Residents of the adjacent Ironwood neighborhood asked the city to reconsider the design of the boundary between Ironwood and Arroyo Lago, which, as proposed, would consist of a 4-foot-high fence atop a 6-foot-high retaining wall to ensure proper drainage.

"It's like, 'Are we already in our graves, because we're looking straight up, or are we in a prison?" said Ironwood resident Diane Atwell.

Another Ironwood resident, Bob Watson, said that the wall and fence would "block Ironwood residents' view of the sky from our bedrooms and family rooms and make us feel like we're in a prison."

While the city council's feedback allows the city and applicants to dive deeper into the project's details, Clark said significant work remains around elements such as design and environmental review before aspects such as unit count solidify.

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

was the lone dissenter in the Cornerstone vote, as rejecting Cornerstone would have surely triggered a lawsuit from the state, significant legal expenses, and a loss in court. As a Councilmember, Barrientos is expected to be a responsible steward of city finances. Instead, he acted with reckless disregard for city finances by opposing the project.

One of the anti-Cornerstone letter writers falsely states that Barrientos' vote proves he was the only Councilmember whose "hands weren't tied." In fact, all Councilmembers were free to vote as they wished. Unlike Barrientos, though, the law guided the other Councilmembers' votes. Had any of them concluded staff had erred in recommending approval of Cornerstone, within the constraints imposed by SB330, be sure they would have voted against it, regardless of their personal views towards the project.

Moreover, any of Barrientos' Co-Councilmembers who opposed the project would have scrupulously documented the legal and technical foundation for their finding, knowing it would need to be defensible in court. Barrientos' "argument" against Cornerstone — that he doesn't like it — would at least make for a speedy hearing.

It has become frighteningly fashionable in our nation, at all levels of government, to embrace disinformation and treat laws with contempt. City Council's approval of Cornerstone demonstrates that Livermore remains impervious to those destructive influences.

Dublin High School Locked Down After Student Altercation on Campus

Dublin High School went on lockdown on the morning of Feb. 20 for approximately one hour following an altercation among three students that left one unconscious and another with minor injuries. The student regained consciousness before police arrived and both hurt students were transported to a nearby hospital for evaluation and treatment. A third student was detained by Dublin Police Services, but has not been identified.

Police responded to a call just before noon involving multiple students at Dublin High School. According to dispatch, 50-100 students gathered in the student union where an altercation was in progress. Police quickly arrived and discovered three students fighting.

The school was placed on lockdown as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of all students.

Once the incident is investigated thoroughly and those involved are identified, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, said Chip Dehnert, director of communication for the Dublin Unified School District. "While we are incredibly disappointed in the students who caused the altercation, we are also frustrated by the many students who chose to video the altercation rather than disperse when asked, making it difficult for staff to intervene."

Dehnert added that as more information becomes available it will be released to the public if it doesn't interfere with an ongoing investigation. The names of the students have not been released.

The incident remains under investigation. Anyone with information or video footage is encouraged to contact Dublin Police Services at 925-833-6670.

Valley Chorale to Perform First Shows Under Artistic Director Joseph Castro

The Valley Concert Chorale (VCC) will perform Beethoven's Mass in C Major and selection from Elaine Hegenberg's "Songs from Silence" at the First Presbyterian Church in Livermore at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Pleasanton at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 16.

The concerts will be the first for the chorale new artistic director and conductor Joseph Castro.

Castro, a Bay Area native, has a bachelor's degree in vocal performance and a master's degree in choral conducting from California State University, East Bay.

He succeeds John Bush, who stepped down as artistic director and conductor last May after 25 years with the chorale.

Tickets for the concerts are $30, with discounts for college students with valid ID, and are available online at valleyconcertchorale.org or by calling 925-866-4003. Children 12 and under are free.

Blues Musician Ronnie Baker Brooks Brings Tour to Almost Famous Lounge

Guitarist Ronnie Baker Brooks, the son of the late Chicago blues legend Lonnie Brooks, will play the Almost Famous Wine Lounge, 2271 S. Vasco Road in Livermore on Saturday, March 1.

Born in 1967, Brooks began playing guitar when he was 9. After high school, he joined his father's band as a roadie and later as the group's bass guitarist. He made his recording debut on the band's "Live from Chicago: Bayou Lightning Strikes" album in 1988.

Brooks launched a solo career in 1998. His fifth album, "Blues in My DNA," was released in 2024.

Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. performance start at $33 and are available at almostfamous.wine.

PUSD

(Continued from front page)

"We are going to do some happy talk today," Ghysels said as he praised the district's 14 Distinguished Schools awards and nine Blue Ribbon honors. He went on to applaud the district's improvements to school campuses, paid for with Measure I dollars. Measure I funds, which were approved by voters in 2022, are restricted dollars, which means they cannot be used for anything other than structural improvements to the district.

"When there are nicer schools, when they look better, they (students) perform better and property taxes go up," Ghysels added. "And when our schools are looking good everything slides in the right direction… curb appeal is important, and students know when they walk into a place that looks good — it gives them a sense of worth. I am so proud of the district because we have built every project on time and within budget."

But not all the financial news is rosy.

Ghysels went on to discuss the district's significant shortfall and the difficult staffing decisions it has had to make to balance the budget. Over the past four years, the district has tapped its reserve and one-time funds to cover costs, leading to deficit spending. By the end of the fiscal year 2024-'25, unrestricted reserves are expected to dip below the 3% minimum required by the state and the district is looking to eliminate the equivalent of 31.3 full-time positions, out of the district's nearly 1,300 employees, plus other cost-saving measures for a total reduction of $6.3 million.

"There is nothing to celebrate about reductions, there are many people that are going to be laid off," said Ghysels. "But the trustees worked 20 hours on the budget and listened to many, many hours of public comment … When I first got this job, my friend said 'Oh, you're going to be the hatchet man' but I think this whole exercise helped us build relationships and trust and create even more momentum."

That momentum includes reconsidering potential uses of the district's vacant properties.

"We have a lot of space available for rent," Ghysels added before pivoting to ways to boost enrollment in the district such as encouraging local business owners to consider enrolling their children in PUSD.

"Flat (enrollment) is the new growth and it's really exciting," said Ghysels. "We are calling on local companies, we are hustling, we are saying, 'Hey, if you live in Lathrop, if you live in Richmond, you can come to our schools … It's exciting: a crisis is a terrible thing to waste."

Troubled finances and declining enrollment have also set the stage for the district potentially seeking voter approval for a parcel tax to be added to district residents' total real estate taxes. The district has never tried to secure that source of funding.

"It's an anomaly to me that we live in this community, and we don't have a parcel tax," Ghysels said. "I could talk for 20 minutes about that; I won't, but you know, you make good on a challenge, and that's what we are doing."

PUSD Board President Justin Brown segued off Ghysels' can-do approach by highlighting the board's intensive search for the district's new superintendent. Ghysels came on as interim superintendent in July after Superintendent David Haglund abruptly resigned. Brown said the board is currently in the process of finding a permanent replacement.

"We are looking at internal candidates as well as outside ones with the intent to have someone in place by July 1," said Brown. The PUSD board was set to interview several superintendent search firms during a special meeting this week.

The event also included the presentation of the Pillars of Pleasanton Awards, presented by PPIE Executive Director Andrea Wilson, awarded to local businesses that support PUSD through funding, sponsorship and volunteerism. This year's honorees were: Van Pelt Construction Services (which received the district's Legacy Award), Robert Half, Vulcan Material Company, Katie Moe of Connect California Homes, Jing Xue of Coldwell Banker, and Karen Braga of Karen's Yard Cards.

For more information on PPIE, visit https://ppie.org/

Book Sale at Pleasanton Library

Friends of the Pleasanton Library (FPL) will hold a four-day book sale at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Blvd., from Thursday, March 20, through Sunday, March 23.

In addition to surplus books for children and adults, the sale will include DVDs, CDs, games and puzzles, including many donated by members of the community.

Sale hours are 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, when a bag provided by FPL can be filled with books and other items for $7.

Proceeds from the sale help support library programs.

Livermore Valley Wine Group Forms International Alliance

The nonprofit Livermore Valley Wine Community (LVWC) has formed an alliance with other regional wine organizations in the U.S. and overseas to promote collaboration and share best practices around viticulture, agri-tourism, marketing, and economic development.

Alameda County District Supervisor David Haubert held an online news conference this morning (Feb. 27) to formally announce formation of the Global Artisan Vintners Alliance (Global AVA).

In addition to LVWC, founding members include Texas Hill Country Wineries in Texas and trade groups in Chilecito, Argentina, Dalmatia, Croatia, Chinon, France, Alentejo, Portugal, Vale dos Vinhedos, Brazil, Badacsony, Hungary, and Ensenada, Mexico.

The international alliance will be headquartered in Livermore.



The Livermore Police Department's Summer Youth Academy will return from July 8-18, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Livermore Police Department. Teens 13-17 years old who are curious about law enforcement get the chance to go behind the scenes with LPD, learn about patrol procedures, traffic and impaired driving, crime scene investigations, K9 and more. The program is open to Livermore youth. Registration will open soon. Follow the police department's social media for updates. (Photo courtesy of LPD)

PFAS

(Continued from front page)

to responsibly address contamination. The water board would then award grants or loans to local agencies and cities to help offset the costs for cleanup. If passed and signed by the governor, the law would take effect Jan. 1, 2026.

PFAS, which stands for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a group of thousands of human-made chemicals, including the aqueous fill form foam (AFFF) used in firefighting and at airports to put out fuel fires. They can persist in water and soil for hundreds of thousands of years, hence their nickname "forever chemicals," and have been found in water, air, fish and soil around the world, making their way into the food chain and into human and animal blood.

They are also used in numerous other consumer products, including waterproof fabrics, paper, nonstick cookware, stain resistant coatings, and personal care products. PFAS chemicals have been linked to cancer, liver problems, decreased fertility and other health issues in humans and animals. A recent study found PFAS in water systems serving 25.4 million Californians, McNerney's office said.

"California has banned PFAS in consumer products ranging from food packaging and cosmetics to children's cribs and playpens. But PFAS ... (have) been used in thousands of products during the past eight decades, so forever chemicals have contaminated a substantial portion of our drinking water," McNerney said in a statement. "SB 454 would create a much-needed funding tool to help local agencies pay for PFAS cleanup, while also helping protect ratepayers from higher costs."

SB 454 is co-sponsored by the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA).

According to McNerney, California's State Water Resources Control Board is working on safety standards for drinking water that might be stricter than those established last year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In 2023, the 3M Co. agreed to pay public water systems across the U.S. up to $12.5 billion to settle lawsuits over PFAS. Pleasanton and Zone 7 were among the water agencies involved in the suit and receiving payments.

Zone 7's treatment plan includes three treatment facilities. Its Stoneridge PFAS



State Sen. Jerry McNerney

plant came online in Summer 2023. The facility cost $13.9 million to build, with estimated annual operating costs of $200,000, Pryor said.

Zone 7's Chain of Lakes PFAS Treatment Plant is under construction and scheduled to come online next month. Pryor said the construction cost is $24.4 million with estimated annual operating costs of $300,000. The Mocho PFAS Treatment Plant is in its design phase with construction likely to begin in the summer with completion three years later. The preliminary estimated construction cost is $33 million with estimated yearly operating costs of $500,000.

In Pleasanton, Councilmember Julie Testa said the city was working with Zone 7 to potentially create new wells and treat the current ones. The city, she said, will likely support McNerney's legislation.

"There will be significant funding needed, and the state and federal need to step in, because this is such a significant problem for cities across the state and, in fact, across the country," Testa said.

It was not yet known how much money the city will receive from the settlement with 3M, but it will not be enough, Testa said.

"It wasn't the fault of anyone or anything locally," Testa said. "PFAS are manmade and should never have been in our environment and at any level, and certainly weren't something that local municipalities introduced," she said.

Testa said Pleasanton's investments addressing PFAS have placed a considerable financial burden on the city and Pleasanton ratepayers.

"If this bill moves forward and state funds become available, it could provide much-needed financial relief and potentially accelerate the implementation of permanent solutions," Testa added. "This would also help lessen the direct cost impacts on residents and support the city's water quality and infrastructure goals."

So far, Pleasanton has spent $2.2 million on the development and design of a rehabilitation plan for Wells 5, 6, and 8 and a PFAS treatment plant. In September 2020, the city began developing the treatment and rehab project to address contamination and extend the life of the existing groundwater supply. The project would rehabilitate or replace well facilities and construct a centralized treatment facility for disinfection and PFAS treatment of groundwater before distribution. The preliminary cost estimate was $46 million, Testa said.

Pleasanton also has spent $310,000 on a Water Supply Alternative Study, which explored 11 options on how to deal with the issue. The City Council selected a project to construct two new groundwater wells away from the site of the PFAS contamination.

Other anticipated costs include:

- Up to $1.5 million on the feasibility study for the joint City-Zone 7 Regional Groundwater Wells project
- Approximately $4 million per year for purchasing 100% of the city's water from Zone 7 since Wells 5 and 6 were taken offline because of PFAS.
- About $300,000 annually for PFAS monitoring, such as lab testing.

The city also has received grants to address PFAS through Tri-Valley Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and U.S. Congressman Eric Swalwell, Testa said.

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SUNOL REP

(Continued from front page)



Actors rehearse for "Robin Hood & His Merry Men" at the Sunol Repertory Threatre on Feb. 20. Left to right: Aaron Bobertz (as Prince John), Seth Leick (Little John), Donna Blevins (Lady Sheriff of Nottingham), Peter Grayson (Robin Hood), Claire Leick (Maid Marion), and Lea Blevins (Lady Helena). The show starts March 8. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

and the more outspoken of the two. "But it's not that he's the Teller to my Penn; if he has something to say he will say it, but I usually have more to say."

They both had mixed feelings at first about putting on a retelling of a widely known tale, Sarboraria said. "I wanted to do something original, something nobody had ever seen before." But in the end, Bobertz added that among the selections they whittled it down to, "this one just seemed more fun, and fitting to the SRT style of plays we've done in the past."

Sarboraria chimed in: "I think that it's going to be different enough and that there are enough silly gags. We've been rewriting and rewriting and rewriting because it's a script that we're allowed to do that with." Licensing and fees play a role in the selection process, she added. "We couldn't do well-known plays or anything like that because the licensing for those costs more. And we want to give as much money to the school as possible."

Sarboraria said she and Bobertz have been adding and changing jokes. "We really hope that it's going to end up being unique to the Robin Hood story."

Bobertz added, "Yeah, it is kind of funny, there's an (audience participation) part in the play where (the actors are) like, 'Do you want the no-good-Sheriff to win?' And I'm joking in the crowd like, 'Yay tariffs!'" he laughed. "I'm just playing, obviously."

In this classic tale, the villainous Prince John, with his henchman the Sheriff of Nottingham at his side, decree that the citizens of Nottingham must pay exorbitant taxes or face a grim fate.

The story tumbles along hilariously through thumb wars, the actors' (staged) missed cues and lines, and a slow-motion fight scene as all hope seems lost for the townsfolk — until the arrival of the dashing and valiant Robin Hood and his merry band of outlaws who rob the rich and give to the poor while attempting to rescue the lovely Maid Marian.

Audiences can expect to see the same wacky humor and gags to which they've grown accustomed to the past 42 seasons, but may also be delighted and surprised by some newness and change, according to co-director Chris Bobertz.

The theater has always been run entirely by volunteers from the community. This year some of the local parents have gotten involved in helping upgrade the stage lighting system. Bobertz, who works in IT by day, said, "I have a halfway decent network people in AV (audiovisual technology). And a couple of parents at the school actually went to school for theater and lighting design and things like that. Go figure."

The result has been about $10,000 or so of donated equipment from different organizations to help update some of the old theater's lighting and control boards.

A parent of one of the kids in the play works for the global AV tech company Avidex, Bobertz said. "And they had some mandatory volunteer hours basically. And he's like, 'Hey, we could use them.' And so a couple of technicians came out for a few days and helped do some rewiring."

"We just added many more fixtures that we can work with and colors and things like that to help really kind of up-level the production value," said Bobertz.

And back again since their debut last year following the retirement of long-time pianist Alan Shell will be the live student band directed by Sunol Glen music teacher,Maretha Davel.

"She brought kids in last year and it was really cool and they got really into it. They were playing sound effects when people would fall, they'd be like, 'wah-wahhhh' on the trombone or whatever. It was really cute."

But perhaps the most exciting addition in the company's 42nd season is the addition of a matinee performance.

Bobertz said, "We are trying to do so many things differently this year. ... So we decided to throw it in this year and see how it goes. And I think we've sold a lot of tickets for that already."

"We're really trying to do more social media, reach out to more papers, you know, things like that. It's been done in the past, but a lot of the cast and crew are aging out, so they're not really in that world."

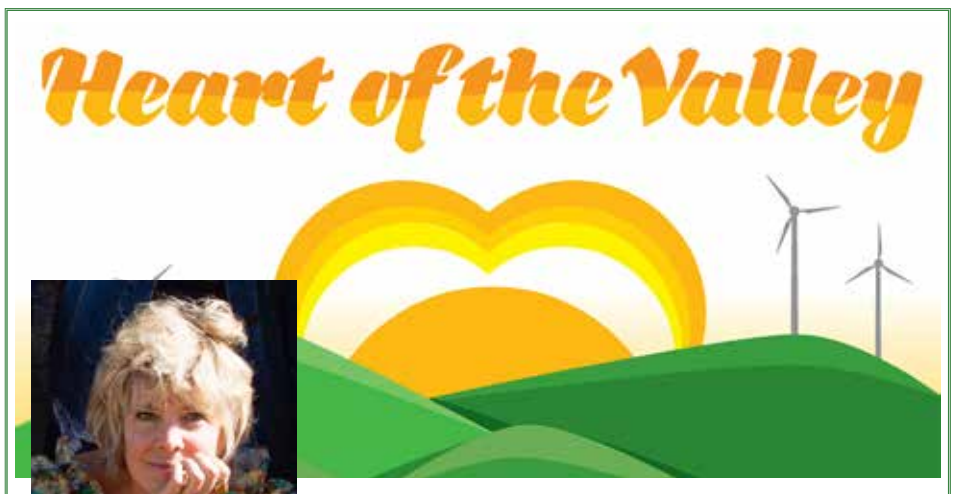
Sarboraria added, "Sunol is just like one of those towns where everyone cares about the town and they band together."

And in a small hamlet with a population of 922 it really can sometimes take a village to get things done.


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Art Is Everything

By Christina Cavallaro

January was the official one-year anniversary of my Heart of the Valley column, but I think of February, with its focus on the heart, as my muse month. It wasn't all cupids and roses this February though. Just a few days before Valentine's Day, when teens should be gathered at dances and out on first dates, a crowd of Livermore and Granada high school students marched through downtown Livermore on Feb. 11 to protest ICE and the federal government's plans to deport immigrants. Instead of worrying about the chances of getting a valentine from a crush, many of these students, the children of immigrants, were worrying about whether their parents might be taken away.

I was at a songwriter's open mic at Swirl later that same week and owner Michelle Braatz had a friend who popped in during the performances. I noticed they scooted to the corner and were huddled in conversation. She told me later her friend is an immigration lawyer. "She said it wasn't a good week." The attorney had come in for some wine, a respite and to listen to some songs. "Art is everything," Braatz said.

Long before kids had to grow up so quickly and be faced with complex world issues that many grownups can hardly comprehend, I'll never forget the empowering feeling I had the first time I implemented change and brought people together through my own creative expression. At East Avenue Middle School, where I attended junior high, the whole student body had been shuffling into the gym for years each December to watch the same annual holiday play.

When I was in eighth grade, I was selected to write a new play. Nobel-Prize-winning literature it was not, nor did it matter that, as memory serves, I was the only submission to the call for entries. My theatrical piece was titled, "The Year Santa Retired," and featured a cast of colorful characters vying to replace the old Santa Claus. (Spoiler alert: none of them got the job.) It was filled with some choice 1980s gags and dated references like a "secretary" who planned to cleverly take all the ribbons out of the typewriters in the world and wrap presents with them. It wasn't high art, but it was my art.

Art of all kinds, and youth art in particular, feels critical. Even in more normal times, art seems to get short shrift when it comes to setting priorities in education and society. That's especially true now, as federal arts and education funding gets slashed by the new administration.

People in and around the Tri-Valley have long valued art, and it shows: The Livermore Art Association recently donated $500 each to the Livermore, Del Valle and Granada high school art departments to ensure young artists can continue to explore and develop their talents.

Heather Dever, a volunteer for the Livermore Art Association (LAA), chairs the The Future is Now art show in conjunction with the Civic Center Library's Livermore Reads Together program, which she encourages young people to enter. "They understand, I think viscerally, that what we older people think of as future problems, comfortably far away, are problems of the here and now, and they have ideas around that."

Dever emailed me an image of a colored pencil on pastel drawing by Livermore High school freshman Ethan Mosca, depicting a fluffy cyborg fennec fox, that illustrated her point. "And LAA wants to help students explore those ideas," she said, adding, "I think art, both the creation and the viewing of it, helps us envision our thoughts and feelings, our reactions to whatever is going on in our lives, before the knowledge is available consciously or in words."

Last October, Sunol Glen School art teacher Heather Cass gave her fall elective class creative license when they were asked to sketch the entrance of the school with its flagpole, which last year stood at the center of a heated school board debate that led to a 2-1 decision to ban Pride flags at Sunol Glen, and ultimately to the recall of two board members. "They had artistic flexibility," she said. Angad Mann, an 8th-grader there added, "Yeah, you could draw your own flag."

In an excerpt from a poem shared by past Livermore Poet Laureate Cynthia Patton, who occupied her post from 2017-2022, she praised arts volunteers: "Because art matters. Because this is our home. Because giving is what makes us open to all the world's heartache and wonder, to all its barren beauty. Because creativity makes each of us collectively sing."

Part of Patton's term as poet laureate was overlapped with the pandemic, when the city was revising its cultural arts plan. Livermore's plan aimed to include younger families, and more people of color and voices not always heard as loudly in the local arts community, and had hired the San Jose-based Art Builds Community art planning group to help ensure that diversity.

Patton collaborated with Art Builds Community on a project called "Hidden Hearts," wherein people at public events were guided to fill out prompts to create the lines of a poem related to matters of the heart. The words were printed on strips of paper that were then shaped to form paper beads with the poems inside them, created from prompts like "My heart sings when —."

Patton thought people would make bracelets, but almost everyone made a necklace. And as they would touch the necklace, their hands were always over their heart, she noticed.

"I had kids ask, 'Is it OK if I write about my grandpa? He died last year.' And I was like, 'Oh yeah, it's totally OK."

"There were a lot of people processing grief, and loss, and you know just the whole pandemic stuff."

"It really felt like it was healing in a way that I had not anticipated. There were a whole lot of times, both before the pandemic and after, where I felt like through poetry, people were being able to voice things that they couldn't otherwise voice."

Where there is art, there is heart. Let us protect both.

Do you have tidbits about the Tri-Valley or know of interesting people, places, events or unique perspectives that should be featured in the Heart of the Valley monthly column? If so, we want to hear from you.

Livermore Council Authorizes Talks For Homes at Former School Site

By Larry Altman

The City Council on Monday unanimously authorized city staff to negotiate with a developer that wants to build homes at a site once planned for a Catholic high school in the Springtown neighborhood.

The 5-0 vote allows the city's planners to negotiate with the Adventus Corporation to build 14 to 18 residences on a portion of 122 acres it owns at 3658 Las Colina Road, north of Interstate 580. The proposal would require a land use designation change in the city's General Plan from "Limited Agricultural" with a high school, to "Hillside Conservation" with medium-density residential. The site is within the city's urban growth boundary.

"To make sure it's clear for everyone, this is the start of the process, not a final decision" Livermore Vice Mayor Evan Branning said, speaking to Livermore Principal Planner Andy Ross. "So, you will come back with a negotiated deal, and then we will have another chance to decide if that's appropriate or not."

Nearly 20 years ago, the city council approved a plan to build the East Bay's first new Catholic high school in 40 years at the site of a former cattle ranch. At the time of the vote in 2005, the plan was for the school to open by 2008. The campus would have started small with 250 to 300 students but had the capacity for 1,600.

The 32-acre campus would have included classrooms, a chapel and ball fields. At the time, the site was owned by Catholic Cemeteries. Fundraising was halted at about the same time the Catholic diocese was preparing to build the Cathedral Center of Christ the Light church in Oakland.

The development agreement was set to expire in December. Adventus submitted a new proposal for the medium-density plan of 14 to 18 homes on the land where the high school would have been built.

Once talks conclude and the developer seeks the land use change, the city will negotiate with the developer for "additional community benefit" to justify the designation for homes. That might include the developer including trails and park improvements, permanent conservation of open space, financial contributions to public facilities and amenities, other public infrastructure enhancements or financial contributions to the city's Community Benefit Fund.

Resident Jean King submitted a comment to the council prior to the meeting — she was not in attendance — arguing for less density and to preserve part of the parcel as open space. "This area is on the edge of Springtown and a lower density might be more acceptable to the present Springtown residents," she wrote. "The City should bargain for greater community benefits in negotiations with the developer."

During the council discussion before the vote, Branning received support to allow planners leeway in negotiating with Adventus for the project's density, whether more or less than the suggested 14 to 18 homes.

"As this solidifies and becomes more of a plan, I don't want to be locked into the 14 to 18," Branning said. "I can see potentially slightly denser or slightly less dense, both having advantages and disadvantages and tradeoffs there."

The planning will take about a year.



Dublin and Emerald High Schools' Irish Guard marches down Village Parkway in the city's 2023 St. Patrick's Parade. (File photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Dublin Celebration Displays Irish History and Tradition

Dublin's Irish history and tradition will be on full display Friday, March 14, through Sunday, March 16, as the city hosts its 41st St. Patrick's Day Celebration.

The festivities get underway with the Dublin Historical Society's annual Shamrock Gala at the Shannon Community Center, 11600 Shannon Ave., from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday. The gala is for adults 21 and older and will include dinner, music, dancing, raffle and door prizes.

Tickets are $75 and can be purchased at dublinhistoricalsociety.org.

The annual Alameda County Firefighter's Pancake Breakfast at Fire Station 16, 7494 Donohue Dr., will get things started early on Satrutrday, March 15. Breakfast, including green pancakes, sausages, juice and coffee, will be served from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

The cost is $5 per person and tickets can be purchased at the door. Proceeds will benefit the Alameda County Firefighters Association-Local 55 Charity Fund.

Next up on Saturday will be the big St. Patrick's Day parade, presented by the Rotary Club of Dublin.

The parade will start at 9:30 a.m. at Dublin Boulevard and Amador Plaza Road and continue east on Dublin Boulevard, north on Village Parkway, and west on Amador Valley Boulevard, before ending near the Dublin Senior Center.

More than 80 entries are expected, including floats, marching bands, classic cars, dance troupes, politicians and Irish bagpipers.

A two-day St. Patrick's Day Festival at the Dublin Civic Center will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday and will include three entertainment stages, an Irish Tea Cottage, Irish Marketplace, traditional Irish food and beverages, arts and crafts vendors, and a carnival.

Musical groups booked for the festival include:

The BlackEyed Dempseys, featuring traditional Celtic music with rock 'n' roll.

The Wicked Tinkers, playing bagpipes and tribal drums.

The Hounds of Belfast, a Celtic punk rock band.

Cali Celtic, offering upbeat Irish tunes influenced by the group's California roots.

Stout Rebellion, singing pub favorites with help from the audience.

Golden Bough, with Irish ballads, jigs and reels.

One Eyed Reilly, merging Americana with modern Celtic rock and traditional Irish classics.

The Dance Stage will feature the McGrath Academy of Irish Dance on Saturday and Dublin's own McBride School of Irish Dance on Sunday.

The Irish Tea Cottage will welcome the duo of Margaret Davis and Kristoph Klover, performing original arrangements of Celtic music from the British Isles and Medieval and Renaissance melodies, Extended Roots, playing Irish bluegrass, Peter Daldry, singing a mix of traditional Scottish and Irish tunes, and Bob Gausman, with traditional Irish favorites.

The Irish Marketplace will feature Celtic artwork, kilts and textiles, jewelry, scones and Irish candies, while the International Food Court will offer traditional festival foods and Irish favorites, including Guinness-marinated tri-tip on Irish soda bread, fish and chips, bangers and mash, and corned beef and cabbage.

Guinness, Harp and Smithwick's beer will be available on tap.

New this year will be a Highland Games competition sponsored by the South Bay Scottish Society, including a caber and sheaf throwing challenge for both men and women.

The carnival will be open until 8 p.m. on Saturday and 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Admission to the festival grounds is free, with parking available along Sierra Court and Clark Avenue and in designated lots. There will also be free shuttle service from the Carl Zeiss Meditec parking lot at 5160 Hacienda Dr.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit Authority (BART) will also offer out-of-town visitors free commuter service to either of the Dublin/Pleasanton stations, and free bus rides to the festival from there. To ride for free, guests must tell the driver they are headed to the festival.

There will be a designated passenger drop-off and pick-up area at the festival and secure on-site parking for bikes.

On Sunday, Dublin will also host the annual Shamrock 5K Fun Run and Walk.

Starting at 8:30 a.m. along Dublin Boulevard near the Civic Center, the routes will wind their way through town to finish at the festival. The top three finishers in each division will receive a medallion and gift certificate from Sports Basement, and all registered participants.

To register for the Shamrock 5K Fun Run and Walk, or for more information about Dublin's St. Patrick's Day festivities, got to dublin.ca.gov. Race information is also available by calling 925-556-4500.

All festivities will be held rain or shine.

Pleasanton Schools Moves Toward Hiring Superintendent Search Firm

By Ruth Roberts

The Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) board of trustees has selected a search firm to assist in the hiring of a new superintendent. The board is expected to vote on the recommendation that Hazard, Young, Attea (HYA) Associates, a nationwide educational leadership search firm, during its regular meeting on Feb. 27.

PUSD Interim Superintendent Maurice Ghysels' contract with the district expires on May 31, and the board says it is committed to having a new superintendent in place by July. Ghysels replaced Superintendent David Haglund who stepped down abruptly in April.

HYA Associates, headquartered in Illinois, was unanimously chosen by the board out of three finalists. HYA associate Micah Ali, based in Southern California, fielded a series of questions from the board ranging from how the firm would organize the superintendent search, what specific advantages it brings to the table regarding experience and expertise, and how it would develop a recruitment strategy that aligns with the board's vision for PUSD.

"We do believe we can help you fulfill your objective as to find a superintendent in short order," Ali said. "I am here to get the job done … but I do understand you have a very stringent timeline so we have to be very respectful of that and we will be."

HYA is a network of independent education experts that work for boards of education and administrators to recruit and assist districts in their search for leaders.

"At the end of the day, we need someone sitting in that chair who can be candid and forthright," Ali added.

For more information on the board's agenda, visit http://bit.ly/41xcWnb.

The Amador Valley Quilters Announce Programs for 2025

The Amador Valley Quilters (AVQ), a Pleasanton-based nonprofit group, has announced a lineup of in-person and virtual programs and workshops for 2025, beginning with a lecture and trunk show by Brandy Maslowski, hosts of the "Quilter on Fire" podcast, on Saturday, March 8.

Maslowski is also consulting editor for Quilting Arts Magazine and cohost of Quilting Arts TV.

Her Zoom-based presentation, "Your Mind Matters," will cover her journey from firefighter to full-time quilter and lecturer.

AVQ meets virtually or in-person from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. the second Saturday of the month.

Also on the schedule:

April 12: Julia McLeod will lead a workshop, "Everything but the Cotton," on using old silk neckties, kimonos, and saris to create small wall hangings.

June 14: Kathy Dought will give a Zoom-base lecture, "From Then to Now," sharing her experiences as an "obsessive quilter" over a 25-year career that includes shop owner, author, and quilt and fabric designer.

July 12: AVQ member Rhondi Reeves will give a trunk show on her Halloween and Fourth of July quilts.

Aug. 9: Mel Beach, a fiber artist in San Jose, will give a playful lecture, "Let's Get Rolling on Your Quilting Goals." On Aug. 10, she will lead a workshop, "Intriguing Interleaves."

Sept. 13: Author and lecturer Christine Barnes will give digital trunk show of quilts and wearables, "Color – A Step-by-Step Tutorial," describing how to choose fabrics based on color and pattern. On Sept. 13, AVQ will host a Zoom-based "playing with color" workshop to create an "Urban Sunset."

Oct. 11: Quilting lecturer and instructor Linda Wagner will give a presentation, "Edgy," about designing eye-catching borders.

Nov. 8: Tammy Silver will give a Zoom-based presentation, "A Deep Dive into Batiks," about the history and techniques of working with batik fabrics.

AVQ will also hold a Fabric Sale fundraiser at Pleasanton Middle School at 1:30 p.m. on May 10, 2025.

For more information about AVQ and the 2025 program schedule, go to visit amadorvalleyquilters.org.

City of Dublin Honors Two Young Citizens of the Year

Daniel Colley was named Dublin Citizen of the Year for 2024 during the city's annual awards program last week.

Colley was recognized for time on the Dublin Parks and Community Services Commission and his volunteer work as a mentor for the Engineering and Design Academy program at Dublin High School (DHS).

Colley also volunteers with DHS athletics.

Suhani Gupta, a junior at DHS, was named Young Citizen of the Year for her efforts in creating a mental health nonprofit, Neuro Health Alliance, and partnering with the Dublin Unified School District to develop anti-bullying training programs.

She also serves on the Dublin Youth Council and mentors younger students at Empower Martial Arts.

Both the Citizen of the year and Young Citizen of the Year will receive $300 to be donated to a nonprofit of their choosing.

The annual Organization of the Year award went to Sensory Wall, a nonprofit started by DHS junior Atharva Sharma to help Bay Area schools install sensory walls to benefit special needs students.

Sharma started the nonprofit after creating 4-foot by 4-foot sensory walls at John Green Elementary School in Dublin as an Eagle Scout project.

Sensory walls include textures, shapes, colors and interactive elements to stimulate a student's senses, which can encourage those with sensory processing challenges to engage in classroom activities.

Sharma also serves on the Dublin Youth Council.

The Organization of the Year receives a $500 donation from the city.

The Mayor's Award for working "tirelessly on behalf of the Dublin community" went to real estate agent Susan Yan Tang, while the Mayor's Legacy Awards for "extraordinary, long-term dedication to the Dublin community" went to Bonnie Terra, division chief for the Alameda County Fire Department.

The awards were announced during a ceremony at the Shannon Community Center on Feb. 19. The Dublin City Council will honor the award winners on March 4.

Armchair Travelers to Cruise Northwest Passage by Ship

Doug and Lindy Webb will present an Armchair Travelers program on the Northwest Passage at the Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 13.

The Livermore couple cruised the Northwest Passage, a sea lane connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans above the Arctic Circle, in 2022.

The Northwest Passage was discovered in 1850, but the first successful passage entirely by ship did not come until 1903-1906. The first commercial passenger vessel to navigate the route was in 1984, and pack ice remains an obstacle.

The Webbs sailed from west to east, from Nome, Alaska, through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago to Greenland, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia.

The cruise included side trips to Inuit hamlets and historical sites; closeup views of glaciers, seals, beluga whales and polar bears; mountain hikes in Greenland and a small-boat excursion through an ice-bound fjord.

Registration is not required for the free program.

LPC Holds Campus 5K Fun Run

Las Positas College (LPC) will host a fun run on the Livermore campus on Saturday, March 29.

The 5K run and one-mile walking routes would wind their way through campus landmarks, including the Winery Technology Center, Academic Quad, and amphitheater, while offering views of the surrounding Livermore hills.

The community college called the LPC Run for High Education a "celebration of health, wellness, and the power of education in the Tri-Valley community."

The fun run will kick off at 9 a.m.

The cost is $10 for LPC students and $30 for non-students. Fun run participants will receive a race T-shirt and goodie bag, with medals awarded to the top age-group finishers.

To register, go to bit.ly/LPCRUN2025.

Following the event, LPC will host an open house from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., including guided tours of the campus and an Academic & Resources Fair where members of the community can meet with faculty and staff. The open house will also offer informational sessions on financial aid, first-year free tuition, transfer guarantees, and other student support services.

Park District Hosts Youth Job Fair for Teens Seeking Summer Employment

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) will hold a Zoom-based jobs fair from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 1, to fill hundreds of seasonal positions for this summer.

EBRPD said the Virtual Youth Job Fair will target applicants from 15 to 24 years old, although the minimum age for most positions is 16.

The district is recruiting recreation leaders for camp, both day and overnight, canoeing and kayaking, biking and fishing, in addition to lifeguards, interpretive student aides, public safety student aides, and gate attendant/student laborers.

More information and a Zoom registration link can be found online at ebparks.org/jobs/youth.

EBRPD is currently accepting applications.

Pleasanton Students Can Now Apply For Amador Valley Scholarships

Amador Valley Scholarships (AVS), a nonprofit that awards college scholarships to graduates of Amador Valley, Foothill, and Village high schools in Pleasanton, is now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 school year.

Seniors at Dublin High School are eligible for the Jim Reding Memorial Scholarship and James and Mei Fong-Tong Scholarship administered by AVS.

Last year, AVS awarded more than $100,000 in scholarships to 17 students planning to attend vocational school, community college or four-year university.

Scholarships are based on academic records, merit and financial need, and all finalists will be interviewed by the AVS awards committee.

To apply, go to amadorvalleyscholarshipsinc.org. The deadline to apply is Friday, March 21.

Fund Established to Benefit Dublin Coach

A GoFundMe page has been established for Dublin High School track and field coach Chris Williams, who was recently diagnosed with colon cancer.

Funds raised through the online GoFundMe campaign will help cover medical expenses and ease the financial burden on the coach's family, according to campaign organizer Shana Tris.

The goal is to raise $50,000.

Williams joined the athletic department at Dublin High School in 2008, after coaching cross country for nine years at Skyline High School in Oakland. He created the Dublin All-Comers Track & Field Meets in 2009 and the Northern California Frosh/Soph Championships in 2011.

To donate to the GoFundMe campaign, go to gofundme.com and search for "Support Coach Williams."

Pleasanton Puts On Water Open House

Pleasanton will host an open house at the Veteran's Memorial Building, 301 Main St., on Saturday, March 1, for residents to learn about the city's water supply, conservation efforts, and ongoing projects.

The open house, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., will include hands-on exhibits, live demonstrations, and family-friendly activities, according to a city announcement. City staff will also be available to answer questions.

The event is free and open to the public.

OBITUARIES

Celebration of Life

Deborah Lee Disbrow

July 24, 1964 — Oct. 28, 2024



Deb's celebration of life gathering will be held at the Eagles Hall in Livermore, 527 N. Livermore Ave., on March 23, from 1-4:30 p.m.

Deborah Lee Disbrow, aged 60, passed away on Oct. 28, 2024, in Livermore, California.

For many years Debbie volunteered with the Lil' Pardners Rodeo as part of the Livermore Rodeo. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Livermore Rodeo Foundation c/o Lil' Pardners Rodeo, P.O. Box 646, Livermore, CA 94551. For more information, check out www.livermorerodeo.com/lilpardners.

Robert Korhummel



On Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, Robert Korhummel passed away from natural causes at the age of 91. Bob was born in Switzerland and entered the United States in 1953. He served in the U.S. army for two years. He married Heidi Schellenberg on June 2,1956 and had five children (Mike, Jim, Tom, Sandra and Suzy).

He started his own company, B-K Mill & Fixture, in 1976, and his legacy continues on to this date by his children.

He was the pillar of our family and ultimate father, businessman, and friend to all. He is survived by his children, Jim, Tom, Sandra and Suzy, as well as his eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, two daughters-in-law and two sons-in-law.

He was loved by everyone and will be missed always.

Service will be held on Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m. at St. Charles Catholic Church, located at 1315 Lomitas Ave., Livermore, California.

Callaghan Mortuary is honored to be serving the Korhummel family. An online guestbook is available for condolences at www.callaghanmortuary.com.

Celebration of Life

Darlene Martinell

Nov. 9, 1934 — Jan. 18, 2025



On Nov. 9, 1934, Darlene was born to John and Vivian Lake, in Selah, Washington. Although an only child, she had many relatives that lived nearby. Growing up on 30 acres of apple trees allowed her to spend much time outdoors. She loved talking about her childhood and the wonderful memories that she had with her cousins; climbing apple trees, driving a tractor around the property, and gathering with the extended family. Faith, family and their Swedish heritage and traditions were a big part of life together.

After graduating high school, she attended Business College and Bible College. In 1955, Darlene married Jack Martinell and they spent 68 wonderful years together before he passed in 2023. They lived in Spokane, Washington and Fairfield, California, before moving to Livermore in 1958.

As a longtime Livermore resident, Darlene worked at Sandia (as did her husband) until their first child arrived. Then she devoted her time to raising their two children.

Volunteering and helping others were important to her and she did so in many ways: working as a pink lady at the hospital, playing piano for seniors in rest homes, delivering meals on wheels, and driving people to appointments.

Darlene loved to decorate her home, and she and Jack enjoyed hosting friends and family often. She had a great sense of humor and always made a get together fun and engaging. Her gift of hospitality will be remembered by her friends and family.

Having a love for travel, Darlene would plan in detail trips to places in and out of the U.S. Throughout her travels, she made four trips to Sweden, with her first one being in 1948 at 13 years old. She would often say that she was proud to be made in America with 100% Swedish parts!

Listening to gospel music as well as attending many concerts was something that Darlene and Jack really enjoyed over the years.

Making personalized cards for family and friends on special occasions and holidays brought joy to Darlene. She also enjoyed serving her church by sending cards for prayer requests that came in. Her words of encouragement in these handmade, custom-designed cards that she sent out were admired and appreciated by all who received them. Her Christian faith and family meant everything to her. Almost every morning, she would sit in her favorite chair and enjoy reading in her Bible.

She is survived by her son, Curtis (Lisa) Martinell, daughter, Karen (Paul) Muser, seven grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. A celebration of Darlene's life will be held on March 15, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. at Celebration Church, 1135 Bluebell Dr., Livermore.

Amador Valley Boys Basketball Reaches to New Heights in Win

By Phil Jensen

At halftime against visiting Northgate-Walnut Creek on Feb. 21, Amador Valley High School boys basketball coach Willis Gardner had a simple message for his team, which was trailing by two points.

"I just went in there and told my group, if we play the Amador way, we will win," said Gardner about this North Coast Section Division I quarterfinal game. "Defense first, and then we'll take care of our offense, but we need to get stops. … We came out in the second half and they played the right way and we ended up winning."

With the 66-53 victory, Amador Valley's boys basketball team advanced to the NCS semifinal round for the first time since 2004, when they were in Division II. The Dons, seeded sixth this season in Division I, traveled to face No. Redwood-Larkspur on Feb. 25, after this article's deadline. The championship game will either be Feb. 28 or March 1; the time and location were also undecided.

The Dons, who improved to 21-9 overall with the Feb. 21 victory, outscored Northgate 20-9 in the third quarter and led by at least seven points the entire fourth quarter.

Amador Valley sophomore Jaylen Smith scored a game-high 25 points against Northgate, including five 3-pointers, in the win. Gardner said that Smith has "the ability to take over games when it's needed. … It's great to see him evolve from the beginning of the year until now, phenomenal growth.

"He doesn't turn the ball over. His shots are always on-balance … he makes the right decisions, and he's so calm and patient."

Amador Valley had seven 3-pointers in the first half, but just four after that. "Second half, we said we're going inside," said Gardner, who pointed out that junior guard Cade Krueger got to the rim. Krueger drew fouls in the fourth quarter and was 6-for-8 from the free-throw line as part of his 18 points in the game.

The Dons trailed 35-34 less than two minutes into the second half, but a basket by Biruk Menna started a 14-4 run to end the quarter. Smith had six points in that streak.

Menna had eight points in the game and a team-high 10 rebounds. Krueger added five rebounds and three assists.

Northgate, the No. 14 seed which fell to 20-10, was paced by 15 points and a game-high 14 rebounds by sophomore DeAngelo Smith.

In other local NCS basketball action, Dublin advanced to the Open Division semifinals with a 65-47 victory at No. 5 Liberty-Brentwood on Feb. 20. The Gaels, seeded fourth, were paced by Jaiden Jones with 18 points. Dublin traveled to play No. 1 De La Salle on Feb. 26 after this article's deadline. The championship game will be either Feb. 28 or March 1; the exact date, time and place had not been set at press time.

Livermore advanced to the Division III quarterfinal round before a 60-52 loss to No. 1 seed Branson-Ross on Feb. 21. The eighth-seeded Cowboys, who finished the season with a 15-14 overall record, opened the playoffs with a 71-61 victory over No. 9 San Marin-Novato on Feb. 18.

Boys Soccer

Granada, the No. 2 seed in the NCS Division II playoffs, advanced to the semifinal round with a 1-0 victory over No. 7 California on Feb. 21. That victory followed a first-round shootout win over El Cerrito after the game was tied 5-5 after regulation. Granada hosted No. 3 Pittsburg on Feb. 25 in a semifinal game after this article's deadline. The championship game will be on either Feb. 28 or March 1; the exact date, time and place were undecided at press time.

Livermore, the No. 1 seed in Division III, fell 1-0 to No. 16 College Park-Pleasant Hill in the first round on Feb. 18. The Cowboys finished the season with a 9-10-3 record.

Girls Soccer

Amador Valley shut out its first two NCS Division I playoff opponents to advance to the semifinal round on Feb. 26. The fourth-seeded Dons hosted No. 9 Acalanes-Lafayette, which previously beat No. 1 Carondelet 3-2 in the quarterfinals, after this article went to press. The championship game will be held either Feb. 28 or March 1.

The Dons opened the tournament with a 5-0 victory over Vintage-Napa on Feb. 19, then shut out No. 5 Tamalpais 3-0 on Feb. 22 in a quarterfinal game.

Foothill reached the quarterfinal round of the Division II playoffs before being edged by No. 1 Marin Academy-San Rafael 5-4 in a quarterfinal game on Feb. 21. The Falcons, seeded ninth, opened the tournament with a 1-0 victory over No. 8 Clayton Valley Charter-Concord. Foothill finished its season with an 8-6-4 overall record.

Dublin also advanced to the Division II quarterfinals before a 2-0 loss to No. 15 Cardinal Newman-Santa Rosa. The seventh-seeded Gaels, who finished the season with an 8-6-3 overall record, shut out No. 10 University-San Francisco 3-0 in the first round on Feb. 18.

Granada, the No. 13 seed in Division II, fell 3-0 to No. 4 Urban-San Francisco in the first round on Feb. 18. Granada ended its season with a 7-5-7 overall record.

Girls Basketball

Dublin, the No. 8 seed in the NCS Division I playoffs, lost 65-58 to No. 9 Northgate in first-round action on Feb. 18. The Gaels finished their season with a 22-7 overall record.

Boys Wrestling

Granada's Tyson Tran and Livermore's Asher Nischke both won division titles at the NCS championship on Feb. 22 at James Logan-Union City.

Tran won all five of his matches at the meet in the 159-pound division, including 9-3 over Casa Grande-Petaluma's Caleb Quintua in the championship match. Nischke won the 287-pound title by technical fall over Braeden Carroll of Novato. Nischke pinned his other four opponents, three of them in the first round.

Both wrestlers advanced to this week's California Interscholastic Federation state championships in Bakersfield. Other local wrestlers who qualified for the state championships included Dublin's Yousuf Amin (second, 122) and Granada's Charlie Herrington (second, 146)

Girls Wrestling

Dublin's Navjot Waraich and Granada's S.J. Martin won division titles at the NCS championships on Feb. 22.

Waraich, a senior, won the 100-pound title with a 6-1 victory over College Park's Avery Seidenspinne in the championship match. Martin, a junior, pinned four of her five opponents in the 120-pound division, including Benicia's Svea Gonzalez in the second period of the final.

Both wrestlers advanced to this week's California Interscholastic Federation state championships in Bakersfield. Other local wrestlers who qualified for the state championships included Granada's Maile Nguyen (second, 125) and Dublin's Lana Nguyen (second, 130).



Amador Valley junior forward Eli Pace charges for the basket during the Feb. 1 quarterfinal playoff game against Northgate. The Dons won 55-53, advancing to the semifinal against Redwood in Larkspur on Feb. 25. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)



Amador Valley High senior Maylen Montoya fights to keep the ball in bounds in the Feb. 26 quarterfinal against Tamalpais High. The Dons won 3-0, advancing to the semifinals. (Photo — Leah Silveira)



Dublin senior Yusra Rabi consoles junior Ammassa Rabi after the Dublin girls soccer team ended its season with a 2-0 loss to Cardinal Newman High School on Feb. 21. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

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LEGAL NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612159

The following person(s) doing business as: Preferred Truck and Equipment, 6175 Southfront Road, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pleasanton truck and Equipment Repairs, Inc., 3110 Bush Road, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 7/1/2014. Signature of Registrant/s/: Gina M. Cardera, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6276. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612131

The following person(s) doing business as: Sew in Love, 5429 Brookdale Ave, Oakland, CA 94619 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jennifer Collins, 5429 Brookdale Ave, Oakland, CA 94619. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jennifer Collins, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6277. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612082

The following person(s) doing business as: Huneeus Law, 46 Rock Lane , Berkeley, CA 94708 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Alejandro Huneeus, 46 Rock Lane, Berkeley, CA 94708-1310. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 7/1/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Alejandro Huneeus, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6278. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612101

The following person(s) doing business as: It'll Do, 2315 Central Ave, Suite 122, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Shear Terror LLC, 2315 Central Ave, Suite 122, Alameda, CA 94501. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/14/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Zachary Snyder, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 29, 2025. Expires January 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6279. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612085

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Air Mail Travel, Co.; 2. Air Mail Travel, 129 Lake Ave, Piedmont, CA 94611 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Air Mail Travel Co., LLC, 129 Lake Ave, Piedmont, CA 94611. This business is conducted by a Limitted Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Simone Anne Lang, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6280. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611808

The following person(s) doing business as: MC & Associates Tax and Financial, 735 Anna Maria ST, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Melissa Cook, 735 Anna Maria ST., Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/11/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Melissa Cook, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6281. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611824

The following person(s) doing business as: Shakthi Logistics, 7940 Creekside Drive, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Reboot Aqua Inc., Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/15/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Raghavendra Swamy Nagari, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6282. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612037

The following person(s) doing business as: Sierra Oak Counseling Inc., 4725 1st ST, Suite 266, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sierra Oak Counseling Inc., 4725 1st ST, Suite 266, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/6/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jennifer Green,

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CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 27, 2025. Expires January 26, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6283. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611980

The following person(s) doing business as: Tamara the Lactation Consultant LLC, 556 S I Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tamara the Lactation Consultant LLC, 556 S I Street, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/13/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Tamara Thurston, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 24, 2025. Expires January 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6284. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611746

The following person(s) doing business as: Dumpling Haus, 3442 Livermore Outlets Dr., Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tea Heart Inc., Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Fengyan Huang, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 13, 2025. Expires January 12, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6285. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: SHIRLEY ECKHART CASE NO.: 25PR108033

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of: **Shirley Eckhart** A Petition for Probate has been filed by: **Adrienne Padilla** in the Superior Court of California, County of ALAMEDA. The petition for probate requests that **Adrienne Padilla** be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority. THE COURT REQUIRES ALL PARTIES WHO WISH TO ATTEND THE HEARING ON THE BELOW DATE AND TIME, INCLUDING THOSE WHO WISH TO STATE OBJECTIONS, TO APPEAR BY AUDIO OR VIDEO TECHNOLOGY. THE PARTIES SHOULD CONSULT THE COURTS WEBSITE FOR THE SPECIFIC TELEPHONIC AND VIDEO APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE. THE PARTIES MAY ALSO CONTACT THE PROBATE CLERK AT probateclerk2@alameda.courts.ca.gov. PARTIES MUST BE PRESENT AT LEAST FIVE (5) MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED HEARING TIME.

A HEARING on the petition will be held in this court as follows: **March 5, 2025 at 9:45 A.M. in Dept. 202 Superior Court of California, County of Alameda 2120 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704**

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney. IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California Law. YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (Form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner Diana Lopez 1655 N. Main St., Suite 390 Walnut Creek, CA 94596 (925) 644-7905

The Independent, Legal No. 6286. Published February 13, 20, 27, 2025

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611803

The following person(s) doing business as: iii Safety LLC, 39120 Argounat Way, #234, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): iii Safety LLC, 39120 Argonaut Way, #234, Fremont, CA 94538. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 10/31/2022. Signature of Registrant/s/: Hoi Yan Ko, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6287. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611804

The following person(s) doing business as: Blue Sky Vacation, 1301 Stevenson Blvd, APT#112, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Hoi Yan Ko, 1301 Stevenson Blvd, Apt#112, Fremont, CA 94538. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/1/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Hoi Yan Ko, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6288. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612056

The following person(s) doing business as: WP Cattle Co., 6999 Arroyo Rd., Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Paul D. Banke, P.O. Box 55, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 04/1/1989. Signature of Registrant/s/: Paul D. Banke, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6289. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612164

The following person(s) doing business as: Stampede, 1790 First Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): 3-G Group, LLC, 2061 Pleasant View Lane, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Nick Hill, COO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6290. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612302

The following person(s) doing business as: Colorful Chaos By Jen, 1969 Chalon Glen Court, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s):Jennifer Bell 1969 Chalon Glen Court, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/4/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jennifer Bell, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 5, 2025. Expires February 4, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6291. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611964

The following person(s) doing business as: Tri Valley Auto Glass, 3688 Washington ST, Ste D, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gomes Custom Auto Glass, Inc. 3688 Washington ST, Ste D, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 12/7/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Anthony Gomes, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 23, 2025. Expires January 22, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6292. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611792

The following person(s) doing business as: Bread Srsly, 3310 Peralta Street, Oakland, CA 94608 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bread Srsly, PBC. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/14/2023. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sadie Scheffer, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6293. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612217

The following person(s) doing business as: Feng Cha Teahouse, 6180 Jarvis Ave, Suite W, Newark, CA 94560-1263 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): East Bay Teahouse, 1376 San Lucas Dr., Pittsburg, CA 94565. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Amitpal Gill, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 3, 2025. Expires February 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6294. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612179

The following person(s) doing business as: Quality Housekeeping Services, 644 Heligan LN, Unit 2, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ramon Prieto, 644 Heligan LN, Unit 2, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ramon Prieto, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 31, 2025. Expires January 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6295. Published February 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612352

The following person(s) doing business as: Glowing Reflections, 5688 Linden ST, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Reshma Khatri, 5688 Linden ST, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 12/1/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Reshma Khatri, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 6, 2025. Expires February 5, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6296. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611990

The following person(s) doing business as: Fiesta Cart, 33141 - 7th ST, Union City, CA 94587-2126 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Neha, 33141 - 7th ST, Union City, CA 94587. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Neha, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 24, 2025. Expires January 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6297. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612395

The following person(s) doing business as: Viking Plumbing, 2572 Spyglass Hils Rd., Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ronald L. Monk, 2572 Spyglass Hills Rd, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/28/1998. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ronald L. Monk, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 10, 2025. Expires February 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6298. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612079

The following person(s) doing business as: Erikos Touch LLC, 1285 Gilman ST, Berkely CA 94706 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Erikos Touch LLC, 1285 Gilman ST, Berkeley, CA 94706. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Eriko Johnson, Owner/President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6299. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612279

The following person(s) doing business as: Gluten Free Cards, 5654 Felicia Ave, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): David Kehn, 5654 Felicia Ave, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: David Kehn, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 5, 2025. Expires February 4, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6300. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612271

The following person(s) doing business as: Benchmark Environmental Engineering, 21228 Cabot Boulevard, Hayward, CA 94545 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Forensic Analytical Consulting Services, Inc., 21228 Cabot Boulevard, Hayward, CA 94545. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Fred Vinciguerra, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 5, 2025. Expires February 4, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6301. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612402

The following person(s) doing business as: Alamo Landscape LLC, 1881 Collier Canyon Rd, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Alamo Landscape LLC, 696 San Ramon Valley BLVD, STE 335, Danville, CA 94526 This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/10/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Marco Antonio Cisneros, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 10, 2025. Expires February 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6302. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612448

The following person(s) doing business as: Clearpath Analytics Inc, 5421 Campbell Lane #404, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Clearpath Analytics Inc, 5421 Campbell Lane #404, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Amruta Vantipalli, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 13, 2025. Expires February 12, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6303. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 612308

The following person(s) doing business as: Stealth Street Partners, 289 Wright Brothers Avenue, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): 866, Incorporated, 289 Wright Brothers Avenue, Livermore CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 6/22/2000. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ryan M. Callahan, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 5, 2025. Expires February 4, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6304. Published February 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2025.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 24CV091706 SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Jazzmine C. Wise 3314 Monaghan St Dublin, CA 94568 filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

Present Names: Rileigh Wright

Proposed Name: Rileigh Wise

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING Date:04/18/2024 Time: 9:30 AM Dept: 103

The address of the court is: **Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse 661 Washington ST. Oakland, CA 94607**

A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: The Independent Newspaper 2250 First Street, Livermore, CA 94550

Dated: 2/5/2024 /s/: Han Tran, Judge of the Superior Court.

The Independent, Legal No. 6305. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611962

The following person(s) doing business as: T4T Studio, 4121 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jeordi Tyre, 4121 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jeordi Tyre, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 23, 2025. Expires January 22, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6306. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612146

The following person(s) doing business as: Linen and Thread Co, 16991 Grovenor DR, Castro Valley, CA 94546 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Diana Cardenas, 16991 Grovenor DR, Castro Valley, CA 94546. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/25/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Diana Cardenas, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6307. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612169

The following person(s) doing business as: Wonderbloom Therapy, 1811 Santa Rita RD, Ste 224, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Kelly Shah, 1811 Santa Rita RD, Ste 224, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Kelly Shah, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6308. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612474

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. TaxBeats; 2. TaxBeats Accounting & Tax Services, 4532 Jacodo PL, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Hetal Amarseda, 4532 Jacodo PL, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Hetal Amarseda, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 14, 2025. Expires February 13, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6309. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612129

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Venus en Scorpio Ventures LLC; 2. Venus en Scorpio Coffee; 3. Venus en Scorpio Creative, 1401 21st, ST Suite R, Sacramento, CA 95811 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Venus en Scorpio Ventures LLC, 1401 21st ST, Suite R, Sacramento, CA 95811. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ingrid Ramon Parra, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 29, 2025. Expires January 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6310. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612486

The following person(s) doing business as: Bustamante Concrete, 2322 Stonebridge Road, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Raul Bustamante, 2322 Stonebridge Road, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 5/21/2015. Signature of Registrant/s/: Raul Bustamante, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 14, 2025. Expires February 13, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6311. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612553

The following person(s) doing business as: Friday Specialty Services, 3640 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Irene Friday, 4200 Park Blvd, #235, Oakland, CA 94602. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Irene Friday, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 19, 2025. Expires February 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6312. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612547

The following person(s) doing business as: Pacific Green Funding, 29300 Kohoutek Way, Suite 110, Union City, CA 94587 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Adhi Financial Inc, 29300 Kohautek Way, Suite 110, Union City, CA 94587. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 5/16/2012. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ravi Selvaraj, CEo. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 19, 2025. Expires February 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6313. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612566

The following person(s) doing business as: Dragon Therapeutics, 850 3rd ST, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Anne Szostek, 296 Park View Terr Unit 3, Oakland, CA 94610. This business is conducted by a General Partnership. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/15/25. Signature of Registrant/s/: Anne Szostek, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 19, 2025. Expires February 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6314. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612382

The following person(s) doing business as: Naxiko, 4357 Crestwood ST, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Naxiko, 4357 Crestwood ST, Fremont, CA 94538. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/30/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Fu Wang, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 7, 2025. Expires February 6, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6315. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 586487

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). Creekside Laundry, 20894 Mission Blvd, 20894 Mission Blvd, Hayward, CA 94541. Registered by the following owner(s): Cycle Spin Jr. LLC, 6845 New Melones Circle, Discovery Bay, CA 94505. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 2/15/2022 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Limited Liability Company. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Charles Shavies Jr., Owner/Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on February 11, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 6316. Published February 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2025.

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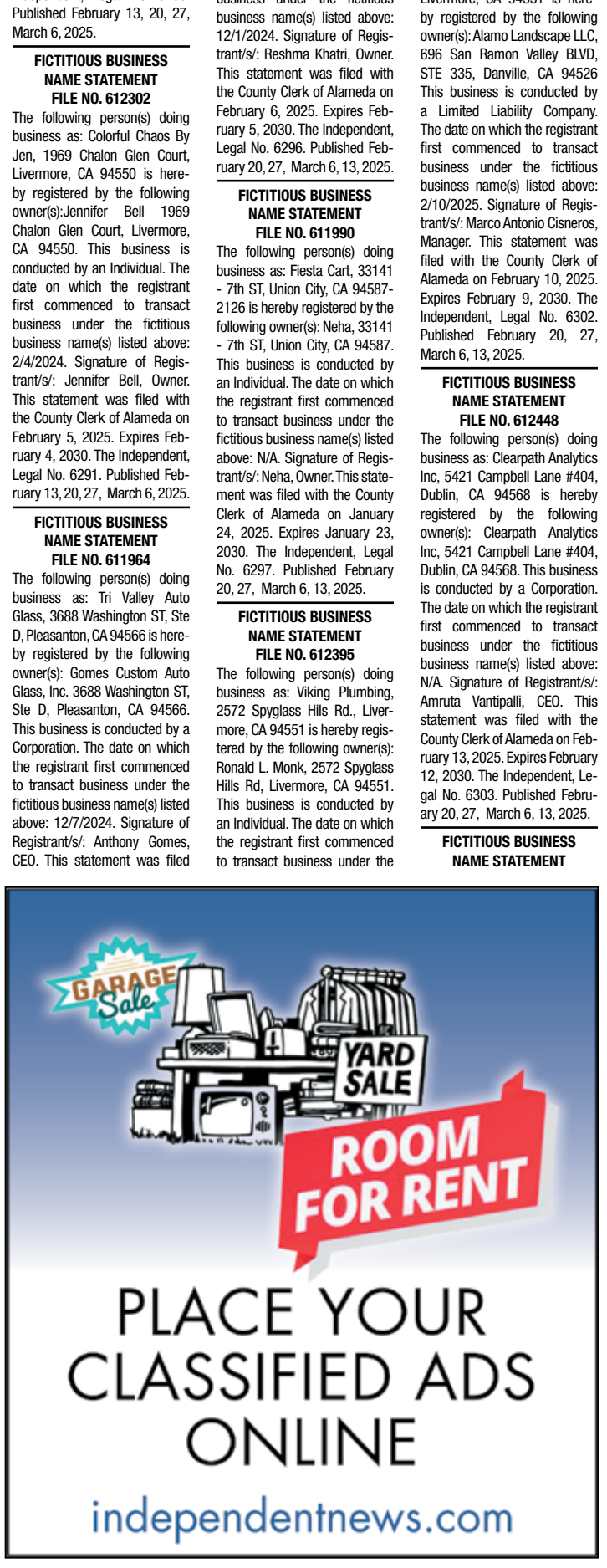
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Whistlestop Writers Open Mic Celebrates 10 Years

By Christina Cavallaro

Swirl on the Square, the cozy Livermore wine bar on the corner of Railroad Avenue and South L Street, has become a hub for the co-mingling of wine and tapas with community and art through its open mics, live music, and other events throughout the year.

Now more than 10 years old, the bar hosted an anniversary celebration for the group on Feb. 20.

Former Livermore Poet Laureate Cynthia Patton started the Whistlestop Writers Open Mic at Swirl in May 2014. She shared memories of its early days and its survival through Covid to now. "It really wasn't on my bucket list of things that I needed or wanted to do in my life," Patton said. But in 2013, Len Alexander, then the executive director of Livermore Valley Arts, roped her into helping out with a literary event called Storied Nights, where a panel of writers would read selections. It was through that curated event that she saw a need for an open mic for the writing community in the Tri-Valley.

"People started coming up in the intermission and saying, 'So when is the open mic going to start?'" And that's when she realized there wasn't one. "There wasn't an open mic in Livermore, there wasn't one in Pleasanton, Dublin, you know, even farther afield like Danville or all up and down the 680 corridor as far as I could tell. There were no open mics."



Open mic co-host Peggy Schimmelman reads a poem at Swirl. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

So she started one at Swirl in 2014 and has kept it thriving since then. Now she co-hosts the evening, held on the third Thursday of every month, with Livermore's current Poet Laureate, Peggy Schimmelman. The venue has become a place where future poet laureates are born. The group welcomes poets and prose writers of all ages and ethnicities.

Schimmelman said, "Participation in the open mic, in addition to giving poets the opportunity to share their work, gives them a chance to build their reputations as poets within the literary community, which is a foot in the door when applying for the poet laureate position." Schimmelman's term ends July 1, 2027.

The poetry open mic at Swirl is not the only momentous anniversary, this year marks 20 years since the Livermore Poet Laureate program began. All five past and present poet laureates still live in Livermore and were in attendance at an anniversary celebration at Swirl on Feb. 20. All five will also be honored at a public reception on Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m. at the Livermore Civic Center Library.

The evening was an effervescent flow of poetry and prose that ran the gamut from bawdy to beautiful, heartfelt to humorous, with some cleverly written political protest poetry thrown in as well.

Connie Post, Livermore's first Poet Laureate (from 2005-2009) posited on the powers of lasagna to save the world. And there was one by her husband, past Poet Laureate (2013-2017) Kevin Gunn, in which he wondered about the ritualistic circling pre-bathroom habits of canines in his poem, "The Promised Land." "If only somehow my dog could speak, I'd learn the Zen of taking a leak."

Patton said the Whistlestop community has always been very generous and welcoming, especially to new people. "I always tell them, you don't have to read, people listening is just fine here."

Schimmelman related that one regular, her friend Kellie Essary, told her that Whistlestop was her favorite event of the month. "She's one of the few people who comes regularly just to listen and support the readers. She doesn't read," Schimmelman said.

Matt Rudolph came all the way from Oakland at Essary's suggestion to just enjoy the poetry and wine, and to invite the group to check out his city's library bookstore bar, Clio's. "Since you are such a literary crowd, I thought you might want to know about it," he said.

"Even from the beginning, the Whistlestop Writers Open Mic has always had a good feeling to it. People are still very generous, very welcoming, very encouraging, of which I'm proud. It's a safe place," said Patton.

At the end of the night, Swirl owner Michelle Braatz, who bought the venue six years ago, waxed somewhat poetically about her future wishes to make room for more youth poets and performance-oriented spoken-word poetry. She said she'd also like to find more ways to offer her business as a safe space for other groups too, like LGBTQIA+ members of the community. "You've got to create the safe spaces for people, especially these days. It's ugly out there."

State Looks at Further Cuts to Solar Reimbursement Rates

By Larry Altman

Residents who put solar panels on their homes before the state reduced its subsidy for newer systems two years ago may soon find themselves getting less back from their utilities.

In April 2023, California officials reduced the amount of money new rooftop solar buyers are compensated for when they sell the extra power they generate back to the state's big three utility companies. Now, California officials are pushing to include those who weren't affected by the earlier decision because they were grandfathered in under the old rate.

In recent reports, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and California Public Advocates Office (PAO) said the pre-2023 Net Energy Metering (NEM) subsidies that Pacific Gas & Electric, San Diego Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison are paying to longtime solar power users are resulting in increased electricity rates for all users and shifting the cost burden to those who do not own solar systems.

"The subsidies funded by non-rooftop solar customers — commonly referred to as a cost shift — are a contributing factor to high electricity rates," the PAO said. "The cost shift to non-rooftop solar customers of PG&E, SCE, and SDG&E has risen from $3.4 billion annually in 2021 to $8.5 billion annually by the end of 2024. Without further intervention, the NEM cost shift will continue to grow."

Enacted in 1997, the NEM subsidy program was designed to entice Californians to install solar panels on their homes. The program worked: some 1.5 million residents purchased systems, and they ended up receiving about 30 cents per kilowatt for extra generated power they didn't use and delivered to the grid.

The CPUC and PAO, however, have long contended that the incentive program has benefited those who could afford the costly rooftop solar systems at the expense of those who could not. The CPUC voted unanimously in 2022 to reduce the credit to just 8 cents per kilowatt for new solar users in April 2023. The PAO said at the time that an analysis found that customers without rooftop solar systems paid an additional $325 annually on their electricity bills to subsidize the NEM solar incentive.

"As retail rates continue to increase for all customers, the subsidies for NEM customers become far more lucrative," the PAO said. "These growing subsidies, paid for by non-rooftop solar customers, contribute to higher electricity rates and result in a higher cost burden to non-NEM customers."

Solar users battled the 2022 rate change, known as NEM3, and convinced the CPUC that the new policy should not affect those who already purchased solar systems under the incentive plan. In response, the panel agreed not to reduce the rebate for those who already owned panels; only new buyers were affected.

Opponents of the incentive policy change contended that cutting the rate would hinder the state's efforts to entice residents to purchase renewable energy systems. Environment California, which advocates for rooftop solar to combat climate change, reported last year that the NEM change "caused the bottom to fall out of the rooftop solar market" in 2023. New rooftop solar installations dropped by 80%, leading to significant job losses in the solar industry, the organization said. The California Solar and Storage Association (CALSSA) reported about 17,000 layoffs.

Meanwhile, electricity prices have continued to rise, prompting Gov. Gavin Newsom to seek recommendations to reduce them, according to the CPUC and PAO.

Besides its suggestion to expand NEM3 to all solar users, the CPUC proposed other ideas in its report, including limiting the number of years a customer can receive the higher rate. The panel also suggested ending the reduced rate when a home is sold and adding new monthly charges to solar system users' bills to maintain the electrical grid they are utilizing.

"Rooftop solar customers do not contribute their fair share of fixed grid costs, such as maintaining power lines and ensuring grid reliability," the PAO said. "These costs are shifted onto non-solar customers, who shoulder a disproportionate financial burden."

In its report, the CPUC said inequities in rate structures and a need for "unprecedented climate impact related investments have created a perfect storm driving electricity rate increases." Besides creating financial hardship, "continued rate inflation will put stress on meeting the state's climate goals."

"Electrifying the transportation, building and industrial sectors are critical decarbonization strategies that become increasingly difficult with every increase in electricity rates," the CPUC report said. "Three areas present opportunities to control costs and reduce electricity bills: first, identifying opportunities to control the growth in utility spending. Second, identifying any opportunities for cost sharing. Third, implementing equitable rates to recover approved costs for wildfire mitigation, public purpose programs and the fixed costs of the grid."

These changes come at a time when the three biggest investor-owned utilities, including PG&E, have benefited from rates that are on average 50% higher than those charged by public utilities. PG&E reported in August 2024 that it expected its rates to rise more than 10% by 2027. And in October, Newsom vetoed a bill that would have reversed some of the CPUC reductions in reimbursements.

Any changes to the NEM system will require another vote of the CPUC.

Laura Deehan, state director for Environment California, disagreed with the argument that the compensation policy hurts those who cannot afford solar systems. The addition of two million rooftop solar-equipped homes, she said, has produced enough energy to avoid rolling blackouts on hot summer days, reduced the need for large expensive power plants, and saved the land necessary to build them.

"What we're doing is saving everybody money by having little mini power plants on two million rooftops, which means we don't have to build them elsewhere," Deehan said. "We don't have to build the power lines to get to them elsewhere. The other reality is that solar customers are still paying into the grid."

Deehan added, "We should be grateful to people who chose to go solar two decades ago." She said it would be a bad policy to suddenly change the compensation rate for people who, in good faith, invested money in rooftop solar and signed an agreement with their utility and the government.

"If we change the rules in the middle of the contract that would have calamitous impacts on public trust," she said.





