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Visitors appear to be impressed by the spectacular holiday light show outside Deacon Dave Rezendes's home at 352 Hillcrest Avenue in Livermore. The display, which requires five people to simultaneously turn on 21 separate power switches, opened to visitors on Nov. 29 with an "Enchanted Story Book" theme that includes 957,007 lights. Rezendes, an ordained minister at St. Michael Catholic Church in Livermore who began the annual lights extravaganza in 1982, offers daily viewings of the lighting outside, subject to weather, from 6-9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and from 6-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday (closes at 9 p.m. Dec. 26-27) through Jan. 1. (Photo — Jacob Clouser)

Work Requirements For Food Assistance Add to Hunger Woes

More Citizens Face Challenges To Receive Benefits

By David Jen

TRI-VALLEY — Some older residents relying on food assistance from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will need to seek work once new, Republican-sponsored legislation takes effect.

Under the new requirements, recipients from 18 to 64 years old without a dependent child younger than 14, and physically and mentally capable of working must work, volunteer or be enrolled in a school or job-training program to remain eligible for SNAP benefits.

The new requirements — enacted in July under the One, Big, Beautiful Bill — extend the upper age limit from 54 years old to 64. If working, recipients must work an average of 20 hours per week and earn a minimum of $217.50 per week before taxes.

Recipients experiencing homelessness, veterans and those currently or recently in foster care will also be subject to the work requirements under the new law, whereas they were previously excused.

A limit of three months of benefits every three years will apply to able-bodied recipients who do not work, although the timing of the limit remains unclear.

(See SNAP, page 6)

DSRSD Receives National Honor For Effective Water-Reuse Efforts

Leadership Results in Winning 2025 Utility of the Future Today Award

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — The Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) recently earned the 2025 Utility of the Future Today award from the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and its national partners for leadership in water reuse.

WEF is a national organization that honors utilities across the country for advancing sustainability and environmental protection.

Arun Goel, DSRSD board president, told The Independent that the recognition reflects the district's long-term commitment to collaboration and sustainability.

"Through strong collaboration with our partners, DSRSD is advancing recycled water initiatives, safeguarding precious drinking water resources and promoting environmental stewardship for a sustainable future," he said.

"Every investment DSRSD makes in recycled water demonstrates our leadership in building a reliable, resilient system — working hand-in-hand with regional partners to secure resources and strengthen sustainability for generations to come," Goel added.

DSRSD's program is distinguished by its scale, long-term reliability and measurable environmental benefits. About 25% of the district's annual water demand is met with recycled water — a contribution that reduces reliance on imported drinking water and boosts drought resilience.

During the summer, the district recycles most wastewater entering its treatment plant, sometimes capturing every available drop on peak days.

For more than 30 years, the district has recycled water to conserve drinking supplies and protect the environment.

DSRSD adopted its first Water Recycling Policy in 1992 and partnered with the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) in 1995 to produce and deliver recycled water through the DSRSD-EBMUD Recycled Water Authority (DERWA).

Since DERWA began operations in 2006, the program has diverted more than 3,300 tons of nitrogen from San Francisco Bay and processed

(See DSRSD, page 7)

Tsunami Forecasting Team Captures Computing Prize

LLNL's Supercomputer El Capitan Plays Key Role

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — The speed and reliability of tsunami forecasts may soon benefit from work performed on Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's (LLNL's) supercomputer El Capitan, buying more time for coastal communities to prepare for the destructive events.

A team of researchers from LLNL, the University of Texas (UT) Austin's Oden Institute and the University of California San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography last month won the 2025 Gordon Bell Prize for work leveraging the Livermore supercomputer to build a set of simulations for tsunami forecasts.

By performing this computationally intensive work ahead of time on El Capitan, more modest computers can now use the simulations for real-time tsunami early warning systems.

"This framework represents a paradigm shift in how we think about early warning systems," said the study's senior author, Omar Ghattas, professor of mechanical engineering and a member of the principal faculty at the Oden Institute. "For the first time, we can combine real-time sensor data with full-physics modeling and uncertainty quantification — fast enough to make decisions before a tsunami reaches the shore. It opens the door to truly predictive, physics-informed emergency-response systems across a range of natural hazards."

Tsunami forecasting previously traded off accuracy for speed, either taking several days to complete or approximating the physics involved, LLNL computational mathematician Tzanio Kolev said.

"Our approach is unique because it is both accurate and fast enough for real-time response — we ultimately

(See TSUNAMI, page 7)

Salmon Make Return to Sunol Valley For First Time in More Than 70 Years

Migration is a Huge Positive for Ecosystem and Other Threatened Species

By David Jen

SUNOL — Chinook salmon last month swam to their farthest point in Alameda Creek in more than 70 years, traveling from the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay through Niles Canyon into Sunol Valley. As of Nov. 19, they had reached a point upstream of Interstate 680, beyond a fish-passage project completed in November by the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup.

The project has opened up more than 20 miles of fish habitat that includes the Arroyo de la Laguna in Pleasanton and the Calaveras Reservoir.

The salmon's return signals more than just new fish in the creek, said Claire Buchanan, the central California regional director at California Trout. California Trout joined the project in 2023 to coordinate permitting and fundraising for the restoration phase of the $6 million project.

"Salmon and steelhead (trout) are ecosystem indicators," Buchanan said. "When you have salmon and steelhead that are healthy and reproducing, you know that you have cool, clean water, and that you're likely supporting other elements of the ecosystem. One of the cool things about our Alameda Creek project in Sunol is that we're already seeing other threatened species coming in our project site, like, we've seen tiger salamanders (and) we've seen northwestern pond turtles."

While historical records recount natural spawning runs in Alameda Creek, the route has been closed off to migratory fish since the 1960s, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers converted lower Alameda Creek from a natural watercourse to a flood-control channel. The conversion destroyed fish habitats and added water-diversion structures. An erosion-control dam for a Bay Area Rapid Transit crossing built in 1972 further blocked the creek.

(See SALMON, page 6)



A Chinook salmon swims up Alameda Creek to spawn where salmon have been unable to travel for more than 70 years. (Photo — Dan Sarka)



Deanna Thach, left, and her husband and business partner, Jeffrey Macapinlac, recently opened Seniors Helping Seniors, which provides a peer-to-peer approach to care. The duo is bringing to the Tri-Valley a service, part of a nationwide network founded in 1998, that pairs active seniors with their less active counterparts to provide companionship and non-medical assistance on daily tasks and needs. (Photo — Tanya Hoang)

Local Duo Promotes 'Seniors Helping Seniors'

Husband-and-Wife Business Partners Launch New Approach to Care in Tri-Valley

By Christina Cavallaro

TRI-VALLEY — When registered nurse Deanna Thach and her husband, Jeffrey Macapinlac, a biomedical device sales executive, had their third baby, they decided to take a leap together on a big career change that better aligned with their growing family's values.

"It's scary to make the jump into uncertainty from your comfort zone. And everything was going well," Macapinlac said. "We both enjoyed our jobs, too, which made it difficult, but we had our third baby, and I knew we had to switch our lives to be mission-driven and be an example for our family and our community about what's possible."

The Livermore couple combined their complementary skills in the medical field and in June opened the doors of Seniors Helping Seniors, which is a company offering a peer-to-peer approach to senior assistance. As part of a national network founded in 1998, the couple is bringing the organization's unique vision for care to the Tri-Valley and Fremont areas.

The business model centers on a reciprocal relationship between active seniors hired to care for their less active counterparts, providing companionship and non-medical assistance on daily tasks and errands. This is a service for seniors who desire to live at home, rather than in an assisted-living facility, by active seniors who enjoy helping others and want companionship.

With years of clinical-nursing experience and volunteer efforts with Meals on Wheels, adult development labs and at a hospice as a patient companion, Thach always felt the pull to take care of others, specifically older adults.

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PET OF THE WEEK



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Dublin Council Approves City-Funded Workers' Compensation

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — The Dublin City Council on Nov. 18 approved a transition to a city-funded workers' compensation program, which will take effect Jan. 1, the city said in a staff report. The move came after the viability of Dublin's current source of Funding, the San Mateo County Cities Insurance Group Joint Powers Authority, became uncertain because of Foster City's withdrawal. The change is intended to provide more stability and also give Dublin more control over claims and costs.

The program, recommended by Human Resources Director Sarah Monnastes, is expected to cost approximately $165,000 annually, pro-rated for the current fiscal year.

Dublin has a long history of a low number of workers' compensation claims. From January 2005 through September 2025, annual claim payments ranged from $374 in 2020 to $86,466 in 2005, with most years at less than $14,000.

In 2024, total paid losses were $8,754, dropping to $2,546 through September 2025. The city's low-risk environment is supported by a predominantly administrative and professional workforce, strong safety practices and outsourcing of police, fire and maintenance services.

Under the new structure, a third-party administrator will handle day-to-day claims, including medical coordination, investigations, regulatory reporting, litigation oversight and return-to-work support.

Excess insurance, projected at roughly $100,000 annually, will cover catastrophic claims above a $750,000 self-insured retention.

As part of the transition, the city will establish a workers' compensation trust account, initially funded with $50,000. Claims will be paid directly from the trust, which the city can replenish as needed. Staff plans to request a mid-year budget adjustment to cover the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Since 2005, Dublin had been a member of the San Mateo County Cities Insurance Group Joint Powers Authority, which administered workers' compensation for its member agencies.

According to the staff report, the city paid $3,000 annually under a $1 million self-insured retention per claim and a $10 million per claim limit, with pooled excess coverage protecting losses of more than $1 million.

When Foster City withdrew in November 2024, Cities Group's long-term viability became uncertain, the report stated, representing a large share of the group's risk.

After review, the board determined that an orderly dissolution was the most prudent approach, requiring each member city to adopt its own program.

Monnastes reviewed several alternatives for Dublin, including enrollment in the State Compensation Insurance Fund and participation in a workers' compensation joint powers authority.

The State Fund is fully insured, with the state assuming all liability for claims. While it provides guaranteed acceptance and a standardized process, agencies must give up nearly all control over claims, including medical-treatment decisions, settlement strategy and return-to-work programs.

Given Dublin's decades of low claims and experience operating under a high-retention framework, the self-funded program was deemed the most cost-effective, actuarially appropriate and operationally consistent option, the report said.

Following council approval, the city will finalize agreements with the administrator, secure excess insurance, complete state filings, coordinate records with the dissolved Cities Group, update internal reporting and return-to-work procedures, and propose a mid-year budget amendment to fund the transition, the report said.

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Officials Herald New Asian, Pacific Islander Leadership

By Vivien Wenneker

DUBLIN — The Asian Pacific American Public Affairs (APAPA) Tri-Valley chapter on Nov. 14 celebrated a transition to new leadership in its annual State of the AAPI Tri-Valley Holiday Mixer at the Dublin Senior Center.

This event brought together more than 40 elected officials, including Jack Balch and John Marchand, the mayors of Pleasanton and Livermore, respectively. In addition, it also highlighted the challenges facing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in the Tri-Valley.



Members of APAPA Tri-Valley's new board, from left, are Nathan Tran, Susanna Wong Ordway, Tiffany Yang, Lily Zhu, Manav Patel, Marsha Golgangco, Seema Chawla, Astha Nigam, Kristie Wang and Margaret Liang. (Photo — Daihieu Tran)

Founded in 2001, APAPA is a national 501(c)(3) organization, with its Tri-Valley chapter having been established in 2015. Since then, the organization has worked to advance the civic engagement of AAPI in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, San Ramon, Danville and the rest of the Tri-Valley.

Its signature initiatives include voter-education events, cultural festivals, such as Dublin's annual Asian Heritage Celebration, and youth internships that place students in government offices to promote civic engagement with the goal of fostering future public service leaders.

"Growing up just across the Altamont in Tracy, and now living in Livermore, I've always loved the vibrant cultures, cuisines and communities that make the Tri-Valley so welcoming for my fellow Asians and Pacific Islanders," APAPA Tri-Valley co-president Nathan Tran said. "Yet we still face disparities in health, housing, voting and other needs. APAPA aims to close these gaps.

"Bringing together allies in government, business and philanthropy, our event was a celebration of the work we've done so far — and an invitation to anyone who wants to help us engage, empower and inspire the Tri-Valley's fastest-growing population."

Tran, who headed the event, was appointed co-president in August. Previously, he served as an aide for State Senator Jerry McNerney and now works as the policy advisor for Innovation Tri-Valley, a regional nonprofit advancing sustainable economic development.

APAPA Tri-Valley's other co-president, Marilyn Cachola Lucey, manages APAPA's national headquarters as executive director. Prior to that, she served as district director for Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan.

According to APAPA board member Kristie Wang, Lucey has been a presence in the Tri-Valley chapter for several years, while Tran is new.

"I invited him to join the board this year, along with Manav Patel," Wang said. "Nathan then brought on Astha Nigam, deputy district director for Rep. Eric Swalwell. … They couldn't be better additions to the board. I see Nathan, Manav and Astha ushering in a fresh new era for our chapter, along with Marilyn's experienced hand to guide us."

Wang added that while past mixers have tended to be more low-key, this one was attended by about 100 leaders from throughout the Tri-Valley, which underscores the impact the AAPI community is having on civic life in the Tri-Valley.

At the event, APAPA was proud to announce that in addition to receiving fiscal support from Alameda County Supervisor David Haubert, Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Anderson recommended the chapter for a $35,000 community impact grant, which will fund its newest initiative: a summer-bridge program for underserved students in the region.

"Civic engagement isn't only voting," Lucey said. "Finding a solution to a gap created by a change in policy is what civic groups are meant to do. That's why we designed a summer-bridge program to support first-generation college students and other populations underrepresented in higher education, to respond to federal cuts to AANAPISI, the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions Program."

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) in September announced it was cutting approximately $350 million in federal funds allotted to Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) grant programs. Among these are AANAPISI programs, which colleges with significant AAPI populations, such as San Joaquin Delta College and institutions within the California State University (CSU) system, rely on for various student services, including counseling, tutoring and transfer support.

In his Nov. 14 presentation, Tran spoke of how despite often being associated with high educational and economic success, AAPI communities in the Tri-Valley are still grappling with pressing issues such as housing insecurity, mental illness and domestic violence.

"In 2018, Asians and Pacific Islanders represented under a third of the Tri-Valley's population," Tran said. "Five years later, we make up over 41%. On the surface, our community is changing a lot. But our heart has not gone away. Every day, more and more leaders, from nonprofits to small businesses, step up to serve our region and keep folks from falling through the cracks. We must bring our community together so every voice, especially the ones not in the room, is truly heard."

To learn more about APAPA Tri-Valley, and its latest civic engagement and leadership programs, visit: https://www.apapa.org/tri-valley.

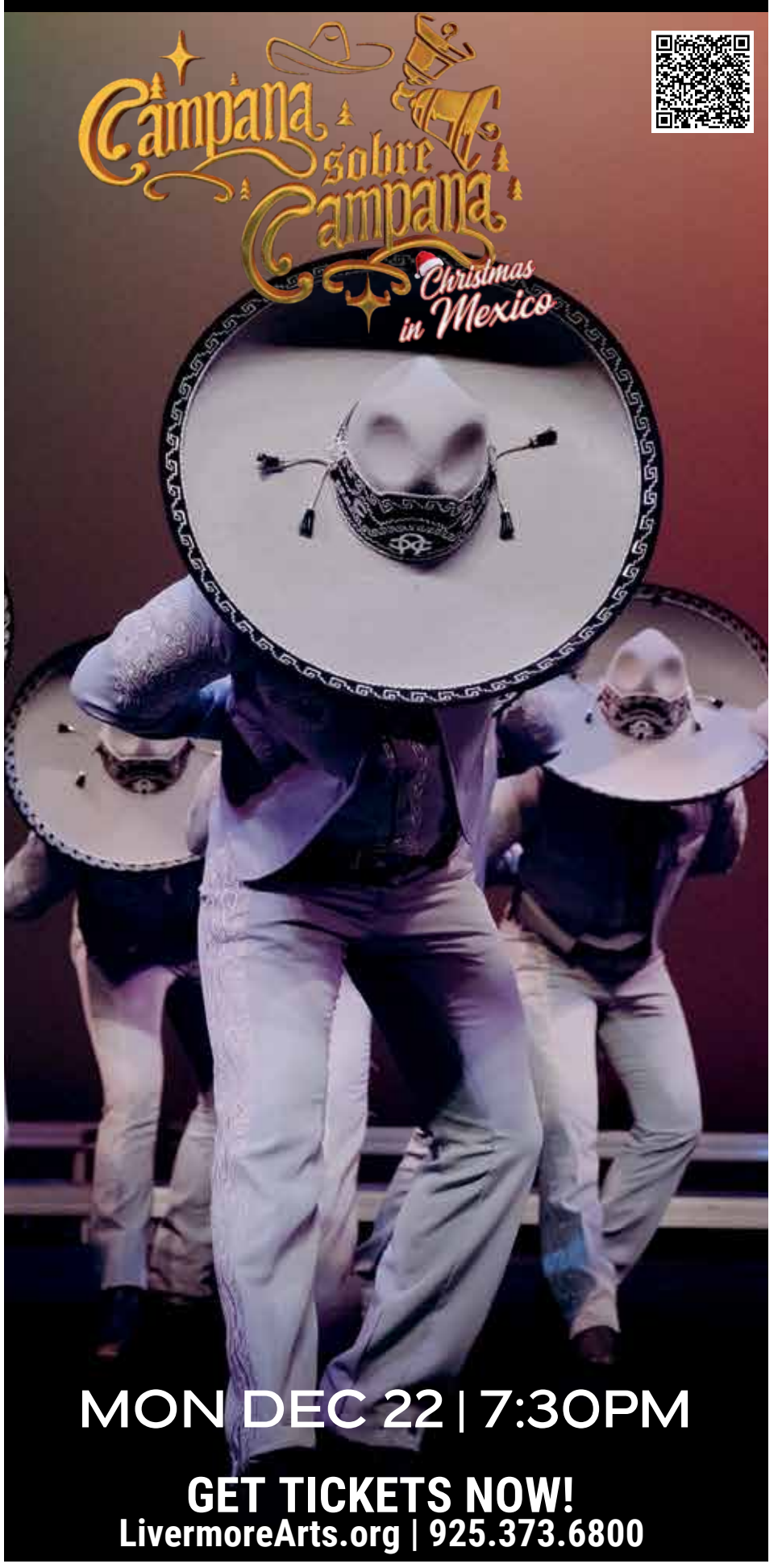


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Dublin Youth Advisory Committee Awards $10K to Student Projects

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — Dublin's Youth Advisory Committee this year awarded a total of $10,000 to student-led projects through the city's Youth Mini-Grant Program, supporting initiatives from STEM outreach to healthy lifestyles, sustainability and cultural programs.

The City Council approved the funding at its Nov. 18 meeting, and the program is supported by the city's General Fund for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Recreation Supervisor Ivan San Pedro told The Independent the program is designed to showcase and empower youth voices across Dublin.

"Since last year, the City Council increased the grant budget from $2,500 to $10,000, which allows us to support a wider range of youth- and teen-led initiatives," he said. "Our goal this year is to reach even more diverse student voices and ensure funding supports organizations representing different interests, cultures and needs across Dublin."

Applications for the program opened Sept. 1 and closed Oct. 5, with 15 proposals submitted. Of those, 10 applicants were invited to present their projects to the Youth Advisory Committee for final consideration.

As part of the allocation process, the committee evaluated each proposal using a rating sheet and recommended funding amounts, which were then reviewed by the Parks and Community Services Commission before final approval by the City Council.

Dublin High School's Diversity Ambassador Program and Emerald High's Basic Life Support Program received the largest grants, $2,500 each.

The Diversity Ambassador Program will fund One Dublin Day, celebrating cultural clubs across high and middle schools, along with the Diversity Ambassador Scholarship program.

Emerald's Basic Life Support Program will provide certification training sessions for students.

Other funded projects include KathaMunch Teens, awarded $1,000 to stage their original teen-written musical, Desi Enough.

Sensory Wall and Latinos Unidos each received $600, to construct classroom-sensory walls and support a Día de los Muertos celebration, respectively.

Three projects — Dublin 4 Wellness, IGNITE Pathways and MANSE Minds — were awarded $500 each to host teen workshops on lifestyle medicine, conduct STEM outreach and robotics demonstrations, and offer mental-health workshops and creative initiatives.

The Youth Empowerment in Military Careers project received $300 to host a mini-boot camp exploring military career options.

Each year, Dublin-based youth organizations can apply for grants to support programs, activities or projects that benefit local students.

Grant recipients must submit brief project reports in April detailing how funds were used and the number of youths impacted, according to the staff report. Recipients are also encouraged to provide photos, testimonials and flyers used to promote their projects. Those who do not submit reports may not be considered for future funding.

Due to school obligations, committee members were unavailable for interviews with The Independent, but staff confirmed the funding recommendations.

Council Advances Plan for Townhomes

By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — The City Council on Nov. 24 approved a plan development, subdivision and site-plan design review for the Abboud Townhomes, located at the southeast corner of East Avenue and Dolores Street.

The plan calls for the construction of 13 two-story townhomes that are attached and grouped together on a single lot, along with one attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The units would range in size from roughly 1,400 to 1,900 square feet, with three or four bedrooms each and attached two-car garages.

Additionally, one of the 13 units would be reserved for a very low-income household (50% of the area median income), according to a June planning commission staff report.

"I think this will be a wonderful project that will beautify Livermore even more, and once this project is built we can have a beautiful building and condominiums at the corner of East and Dolores and provide very nice, affordable housing," said Frank Abboud, the project applicant and site owner.

Abboud had first applied to the City in June 2020 to redevelop the approximately 0.62-acre site with a two-story, attached, 13-unit multi-family, townhome-style development project. Exactly five years later, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider the project, staff recommendations, public comments and findings.

The Commission found that the new development is compatible with existing development and community character and supports the City's goal for increasing housing choice, according to the project's planned development resolution.

Although the City Council was scheduled to vote on the Abboud Townhomes design review and plan development Oct. 27, the item was pushed back due to City staff deciding there hadn't been sufficient notice to provide community members the opportunity to speak.

Four Livermore residents addressed the Council on Nov. 24, citing concerns that included parking, traffic and safety.

"I think it's too many units for the space, with not enough parking inside," said Marlise Mullins, a resident of Vineyard Townhomes, which runs adjacent to the project site. "While I agree that something needs to be done there, I think it's just too much for that area. With two bus stops there, and so many children going to and from school, I think it's going to be a hazardous area for everyone going up and down that street."

Situated between Livermore High School and East Avenue Middle School, the townhomes site is in a particularly congested area already prone to heavy traffic and speeding, multiple speakers said.

Proximity to downtown and immediate access to public transit were highlighted as attractive features of the project.

"I am pleased to see that this is a multi-family, and multi-occupancy unit replacing a single-occupancy unit," said Alan Marling, a Tri-Valley activist and projection artist. "Given the critical housing crisis in California, the solution must come from single-occupancy residences in the suburbs — expanding those by building more units, or opening up guest houses within those units. I appreciate that this is infill housing rather than building housing outside, and no one likes the idea of filling up open spaces with more housing, so this is an alternative for that. Also, it is close to the downtown and the bus stations, which is a key critical element of reducing congestion and reducing the need for multiple cars per unit."

Abboud proposes demolishing the single-family home currently on the site in order to make way for the new development. The home, also referred to as a 'cottage,' is more than 100 years old, bringing into question whether it should be preserved for historical significance.

"The site is currently occupied by a three-bedroom cottage that was built in 1915, so it is ... part of Livermore's history," said Mary Perner, another resident of Vineyard Townhomes. "Also, there's a Lady Banks' rose that reaches to the cottage roof and is approximately 24 feet wide, which is probably as old as the cottage itself and perhaps the oldest rose in Livermore."

The project's lead planner, Kam Purewal, said that over the course of its history, the cottage has undergone numerous modifications, compromising its historical integrity. Assistant City Manager Paul Spence added that City staff have not actually investigated whether the cottage and its rose might be classified as having a heritage status, and if the rose should then be replanted or require any special treatment.

Mayor John Marchand asked City staff to investigate possibilities for preserving the cottage and its rose within the rest of the project plan.

"If something's been around for 115 years, then let's see if we can keep it around for another 115 years," Marchand said. "It would be nice to have that preservation aspect if possible, because right now it looks like the City has fairly little ability to control what happens there, but if there's the opportunity to preserve something, then I think it's worth looking into."

Former LLNL Director Anastasio Awarded

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — Michael R. Anastasio, former director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and the Los Alamos National Laboratory, received the 2025 John S. Foster Jr. Medal in September for his career in nuclear-weapons science.



Former Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) Director Michael R. Anastasio received this year's John S. Foster, Jr. Medal. (Photo Courtesy of LLNL)

The medal, administered by Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC (LLNS), recognizes leadership in the field of nuclear deterrence in the spirit of John S. Foster Jr., who led efforts in nuclear-weapon design at LLNL that continue to inform nuclear weapons in the United States today. Foster died earlier this year at the age of 102.

The director of LLNL awards the medal annually on behalf of LLNS. Medal recipients receive a citation and a $25,000 cash award in addition to the gold medal.

"Mike Anastasio exemplifies the very best of the national laboratory tradition," LLNL Director Kim Budil said in an announcement. "He is known for his dedication to service, extensive technical expertise, visionary leadership and lasting commitment to developing new leaders. Mike has made a profound and lasting impact on the nuclear-security community and, especially, the national security laboratories. These qualities have shaped not only the stockpile stewardship program but also the culture of teamwork and excellence that underpins our mission. We are proud to recognize him with the Foster Medal."

"Take a big enough step so that things get a little radical," Foster once said. "Don't look so far ahead that you really don't know what you are talking about, but don't look so close in the future that you are just putting existing pieces together."

Anastasio served as LLNL director from 2002 to 2006 and then as director of Los Alamos in New Mexico from 2006 to 2011, earning the distinction of being the only person to have served as director of both labs. LLNL has credited his work for spearheading the current era of science-based weapons stewardship, which ensures the safety, security and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear weapons without the need for nuclear testing.

In addition to his director roles, Anastasio also served as a scientific advisor to the Department of Energy. In retirement, he has continued to mentor others at the laboratories, while serving on numerous science, defense and security boards.

He is the 10th recipient of the Foster medal.

Dublin Hosts Breakfast with Santa

Dublin will host its annual Breakfast with Santa at the Shannon Community Center, 11600 Shannon Ave., on Saturday, Dec. 6.

Family breakfasts, including pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee and juice, will be served at 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., each followed by the arrival of Santa Claus.

Families will be welcome to pose for pictures with Santa. The 11:15 a.m. seating will be sensory friendly.

Tickets are $15 for Dublin residents and $18 for nonresidents.

The event benefits the Dublin High School music program, which will provide live music during breakfast.

To register, go to tinyurl.com/ykyz6jee.

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EDITORIAL

The Hunger Emergency Nowhere Near Over

With the federal government reopened and the holiday season upon us, it might be tempting to turn to our personal interests.

The only problem is that the emergency faced by thousands of Tri-Valley residents is not abating.

Before, it was the Trump administration's callous decisions to suspend payments to SNAP recipients in order to pressure Democrats to reopen the government. SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, provides money to low-income people to buy food. In California, the program is administered by the Department of Social Services as CalFresh.

Now, it's the imminent imposition of new work requirements, starting as soon as this month, that will almost certainly make more people go hungry and make those already hungry suffer more.

The SNAP program serves 42 million people in the U.S., with monthly payments averaging $187. That includes approximately 5.3 million signed up for CalFresh, and approximately 9,500 in the Tri-Valley. Almost 39% of recipients are children younger than 18.

The cuts are coming at a time when food banks are seeing an increase in the number of clients. Tri-Valley Haven's food bank saw 20% more visitors in October. Executive Director Christine Dillman told The Independent previously that clients are admitting that they skip meals to ensure their children will eat.

Kathy Young, the president and CEO of the Tri-Valley Non-Profit Alliance, told The Independent on Dec. 1, "I'm hearing from nonprofit leaders across our region that the expanded SNAP work requirements risk cutting off food for people who are already doing everything they can to stay afloat. These changes add new hurdles for the very neighbors we're all trying to support, while shifting even more pressure onto already stretched community organizations."

The new work requirements come from a federal law passed this summer, the so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," a budget reconciliation bill most notorious for increasing ICE's budget tenfold to $100 billion.

But buried in the bill is the new work requirement that must be met in order for applicants to receive SNAP benefits. According to the state, the work requirements will raise the age limit, requiring work from those up to age 64 if they don't have a dependent child younger than 14 and if they are considered physically and mentally able to work at least 20 hours per week. People may also gain SNAP eligibility through volunteer work or if they are enrolled in a school or job-training program.

Those who do not meet any of those requirements but who fall into that age category can receive a maximum of three months of food aid every three years.

Food prices have been climbing steadily, rising on average 2.7% from September 2024 to September 2025, with meat, poultry and fish rising 5.2% in that time, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Almost three-quarters of families receiving SNAP benefits already have someone working. And one-third of families have two or more people working, according to the Census Bureau.

The work requirement, in other words, simply places more burdens on those for whom finding work is already an onerous task. The new requirements repeal exemptions for homeless individuals, veterans and young adults aging out of foster care, all of whom historically have faced higher barriers to employment. California and other states are limited in the exemptions that they can carve out. (In California, three rural counties — Colusa, Imperial and Tulare — are exempt from the new work requirement until Oct. 31, 2026.)

On top of everything else, overall inflation continues to climb, given a boost by price increases resulting from tariffs. This is not a good time to try to find a job, with sales slowing and consumers having less confidence in the economic direction of the country. The only people that seem to be doing well are those making more than $170,000 in annual income. That upper segment seems to be driving most of the consumer spending in the country, with middle- and lower-income demographics pulling back.

President Donald Trump's efforts to wield hunger as a weapon to pressure Democrats to end the shutdown were reprehensible. However, the work requirement can't be laid entirely at his feet. It took an act of the Republican-controlled Congress to cut food aid at precisely the point when more is needed.

A new Democratic-sponsored bill is making its way through Congress. The American Families and Farmers Act will restore some of the cuts to SNAP programs. But because Democrats are in the minority, and Republicans passed the cuts in the first place on a party-line vote, we don't anticipate the Republicans will have a change of heart on this. Only a change in Congress will help, since every Democrat in the U.S. House and Senate voted against the cuts. And there won't be a Democratic majority in Congress until at least after the general election next November.

Instead, it will be incumbent upon all of us, in this holiday season, to reach a little deeper into our own pockets, to the extent that we can, to help those being left behind. Local food banks are already seeing an increase in clientele; that means they need an increase in support to continue meeting that need.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:
Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are required to have the name(s) of the person(s) submitting them, city of residence and phone number, for verification purposes. Letters may not contain advertising. Abusive letters and letters containing ad hominem attacks may be rejected or edited. Letters are subject to verification and may be edited for clarity at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to decide whether or not the letter will be published. Headings for all letters may be edited at the discretion of the editor to properly reflect their content. A headline will be added to letters received without one. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed or not run at all. Letters should be limited to 400 words or less and should be sent by email to letters@independentnews.com or submitted using the form below.
The letters to the editor deadline is Monday at 8 a.m. If you wish to submit a letter pertaining to a special event or meeting taking place on a Monday before any given Thursday print edition — and you would like your letter to run that week — please contact the editor (editor@independentnews.com) as soon as possible on Monday to discuss the content and publication options. Otherwise, all letters submitted after 8 a.m. on Monday must hold until the following week.

Tesla Park

Jean King, Livermore

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) stepped outside of its lane at its Nov. 18, 2025 meeting by approving a letter to the Board of Supervisors which asked the Board to support multi-use trails and associated development in Tesla.

Several people who commented at the meeting stated that the AAC action was premature at best, and at a minimum the committee should undertake an education process because the committee did not have the extensive data, research, and information, including about biological and cultural resources, that had been developed about Tesla over the course of 25 years. The AAC did not see the overwhelming public and tribal input supporting Reserve classification and opposing multi-use trails and related development. The AAC did not review the applicable classification statutes and 2021 legislation, and much more.

There is significant controversy about the growing impacts and appropriateness of multi-use trails on resources and on other users. It is unclear why the AAC has become a promoter of multi-use trails. It is one thing to support a trail connector to Tesla along Tesla Road, but an entirely other thing to conclude that there should be multi-use trails for bikes, mountain bikes, motorized bikes, and more within Tesla itself.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee should focus on agricultural lands, and not reach into areas that are beyond its purview, and for which it does not have the full and complete information upon which to make an informed decision.

Why You Should Still Care about Schools — Children or No

Tara Boyce, Livermore

While campaigning for School Board in 2024, folks would often tell me they no longer had children in our district, or never did, and would not be voting for the School Board positions because it didn't impact them personally. The data proved this. Of all votes cast in 2024, 33% of voters in Livermore skipped the School Board races altogether. Does this describe you?

Studies have shown repeatedly that higher test scores, leading to higher rated schools, lead to real estate advantages, such as higher home values, higher home sales, and less vulnerability in an economic downturn. We see that locally when we compare Livermore to Pleasanton, with Amador ranked #59 and Granada ranked #336 in California by US News and World Report, in the home prices of the two communities. Beyond this, good school districts that are efficiently run and focus on post-graduation success lead to better communities long term. Today, we need this more than ever, given our divisive climate.

Good teachers are critical to the success of any school district. Livermore's teachers need to be compensated fairly and given a path so they too can afford to live in our city without having multiple paying jobs. Right now, our teacher's union (Livermore Education Association) is at an impasse in contract negotiations, and support from our amazing community is necessary to move this forward productively.

Standing up for public education in 2025 is critical, given the attacks on it by our federal administration. Choose any one of the below to add your voice to this fight:

1. Write letters to the School Board via the website, so it's part of the public communication on the Board agenda.

2. Write directly to Superintendent Gibson at tgibson@lvjusd.org.

3. Attend the Dec. 9th School Board meeting at 6 p.m. to lend your support via public comments, or just wearing BLUE!

4. Donate to student fundraisers.

5. VOTE in the 2026 School Board election to make sure the next board is fully prepared and qualified to run the district.

Stay up to date with LEA's social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook!

An Honest Apolitical Question

Paul Stone, Dublin

Our national debt officially hit 38 trillion dollars recently. (Some say it's much higher.)

Nearly every American gets some form of financial transfer from the government, be it pensions, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, tax deductions, various kinds of assistance, subsidies, loans and the like. None of us want to give up any of that.

That being the case, how in the world are we going to dig our way out of debt? I can see only three ways: either a complete collapse of our economy with resulting social chaos, the government drastically devaluing the dollar, or hyper-inflation reminiscent of the Weimar Republic.

You could confiscate every cent from the rich, but that would scarcely make a dent in the debt. And it's of no use to blame either party, as they both have a hand in this.

Does anyone out there, Democrat or Republican, have a viable solution? Do we just keep printing dollars until financial doomsday? Please don't say the answer is socialism; that's historically foolish, and dangerously so.

(By the way, to give you an idea of how much a trillion is, a trillion minutes from Christ's birth would bring us to about the year 1,902,587 A.D.)

Welcome to Trump World: What Exactly Is Trump's Plan for Venezuela?

Rosario Milelli, Pleasanton

What, exactly, is the endgame in Venezuela? Trump has deployed a full naval armada across the Caribbean, expanded operational footprints on multiple island states, and publicly celebrated the destruction of suspected drug-running boats. According to the administration's own summaries, more than a dozen vessels have been destroyed so far, with an estimated 40 to 60 people killed — none of whom received any form of due process. These are extrajudicial killings carried out in international waters, executed at the push of a button and justified after the fact.

The White House insists this campaign is "saving lives," claiming each boat destroyed prevents thousands of American deaths. But nearly all U.S. overdose fatalities stem from fentanyl produced in China and trafficked through Mexico, not cocaine moving through Venezuelan waters. Even the DEA acknowledges Venezuelan-origin cocaine plays only a marginal role in today's overdose crisis. The math behind this mission simply doesn't match reality.

And here's what the administration won't say: These boats could be intercepted non-lethally. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard conduct thousands of interdictions every year by boarding, detaining, and arresting crews without harming a soul. That is standard practice. Trump chose the opposite — remote execution as policy. And in at least one reported incident, Fox News host-turned-Trump envoy Pete Hegseth allegedly ordered the execution of two surviving crew members — not an interdiction, not a capture, but an outright killing. Call it what it is: murder.

And this fits a larger pattern. Trump has repeatedly floated the idea of invading Venezuela, despite having no constitutional or statutory authority to launch an unprovoked war. Advisers have described him pressing the point again and again, asking, "Why can't we just go in?" as if international law, sovereignty, and congressional oversight were optional. That mindset — that a president can use lethal force anywhere, without authorization or accountability—is precisely what produced this current cycle of killings on the high seas.

We are now killing foreign nationals in international waters to address a threat only loosely connected to America's real drug epidemic. Before this escalates further, Congress and the public deserve an honest answer: Is this about protecting Americans, or is it drifting toward yet another intervention in a country long targeted for its vast oil reserves?

Scapegoating Afghanis, Heroin, and the Deep State Objectives

Greg Scott, Livermore

Now, in an atmosphere to create fear, the unhinged, despotic President Trump needs to unleash targeted hatred and scapegoat U.S. Afghanis because of the shooting of two National Guard personnel in Washington, D.C., where one of the victims, Sarah Beckstrom, has died, and the other, Andrew Wolfe, is in critical condition. The alleged suspect is Afghani Rahmanullan Lakanwal, who served in an elite, extremely violent CIA op-

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

Correction

A photo caption that ran on page 2 in the Nov. 27 edition of The Independent contained an incorrect title for Hazel Wetherford, who is deputy city manager for the City of Dublin. Colleen Tribby is the city manager.

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Smiles and elaborate costumes were both plentiful at the 11th annual Tri-Valley Turkey Burn fun run Thanksgiving morning at Ken Mercer Sports Park in Pleasanton. (Photo – Jacob Clouser)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

erations group during the U.S. involvement in the Afghan war and was recruited when he was 15-years-old. Rahmanullan Lakanwal was granted asylum by the Trump administration in April 2025.

Lakanwal is purported to have driven across the country to Washington, D.C. from his low-income apartment he shared with his 5 children and wife in Bellingham, Washington, to carry out the shooting. Interestingly enough, there were Google searches on Lakanwal originating from Washington, D.C. 6 days before the shooting, while Lakanwal was travelling trans-continental. Stranger still, during the early morning before the shooting on Wednesday, November 26th, there were numerous Google searches, initiated from Israel, on Sarah Beckstrom. These search records were recorded in screenshots by podcaster James Li and have since been scrubbed by Google.

In his Afghanistan service against the Taliban, Lakanwal would have observed extensive opium poppy production — heroin's precursor — which the CIA not only ignored, but fostered. The Taliban have since cut the opium poppy production 95% from 2022 levels of 232,000 hectares, to less than 13,000 hectares in 2024. Nevertheless, the Taliban have a huge amount of surplus opium stored, yet the reduced poppy production area has increased the wholesale price of opium by 7 to 10 fold, despite heroin being less than 4% of the global illicit drug trade, largely a result of stiff competition from synthetic opiates like fentanyl.

The CIA keeps a vigilant, watchful monitoring of Afghani heroin, because it is around 25% of Afghanistan's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and a source of critical economic power for the Taliban. The game plan by the Deep State CIA, other intelligence agencies, and the Trump administration is to pressure the U.S. Afghani population that fought against the Taliban for U.S. geopolitical objectives, through the warped thinking of influencing the heroin trade, and primarily to force the return of the Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan to U.S. control.

The Taliban would be merciless on deported U.S. Afghanis repatriated.

Encounter with a Missionary

Abdul Awwal, Pleasanton

The first time I encountered missionaries was when I was growing up in Chittagong, Bangladesh. One of the newspapers decided to publish a children's newspaper, a weekly edition. With this newspaper, there was a comic book insert. It had a picture of a Muslim man praying, and there were two other men on the page who were watching. One said to the other, "Look, he is praying to the moon". Later on, I found out that missionaries target lots of third world poor countries, using economic aid to try to convert a very uneducated class of people. For Muslims, Jesus (peace be upon him) is not unknown, and I would argue that they know more about Jesus than the Christians.

Last weekend, I had an interesting encounter with a missionary in the Balboa garden in San Diego. He asked me, "What is your favorite verse in the Quran?" I thought for a moment, but he did not care for the answer. He said, "The Quran says in 5:47, let the people of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed in it." So, if the Bible is true, how can you say it is corrupted?" (Dr. Ali addresses this issue as well (https://youtu.be/Xl9u3CRUOI0?si=vC2h-JcMUKjJfdMiF). I told him that the Islamic world view is that God sent messengers throughout ages, thus Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad (peace be upon all) are Prophets of Islam. We inherit them. If I was born in the time of Moses, I would be following Islam, if I obey God as prescribed by Moses. I would be a Muslim if I was born in the time of Jesus, and followed the message brought by Jesus. I told him that the Quran makes general statements supporting this world view (5:47). It also talks about Torah given to Moses (pbuh); mentions it is a light and guidance (5:44). Corruption entered into the scriptures when scribes wrote something with their own hand and declared that this is from God. Then the preacher said, "Jesus gave his life to save us." I said, "Look, the Quran is very specific in certain cases. It states, "They did not kill him or crucify him, but it was made to look like that (4:157)." The Quran does not blame any particular group of people for the death of Jesus, while many Christian groups do blame people from another religion.

National Parks

Catherine Johnson, Pleasanton

Only a narcissistic miscreant like the POTUS has the arrogance and audacity to put himself on the new National Park Passes after his 'big, beautiful bill' defunded the national parks and fired hundreds of national park employees. The National Park Pass has traditionally shown an image of the national park or of its wildlife. I can agree with the American-first increase in price for international visitors, since other countries often charge non-citizens a higher fee, but not

(See MAILBOX, page 6)

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Scout Troop 924 will be collecting unflocked Christmas trees and wreaths from Livermore residents for recycling following the holidays. The recycling project is a fundraiser to purchase gear and send Scouts to summer camp, and the troop is asking for a donation of $10 for every Christmas tree and $5 per wreath. Trees and wreaths will be picked up on Saturday, Jan. 3, but pick-ups must be scheduled by Wednesday, Dec. 31. To schedule a pick-up, go to scoutgreen.org. (Photo courtesy of Scout Troop 924)

Legion Post Hosting Oratorical Contest

American Legion Post 47 in Livermore will hold an oratorical contest for high school students in January, the first step in the annual nationwide contest that has been sponsored by the American Legion since 1938.



American Legion Post 47 will host its annual nationwide oratorical contest for high school students on Jan. 10. Last year's student contestants with Post 47 representatives, pictured left to right, were Roy Warner, Anthony Edwards, Megan Belk and Bill Bergman. (Photo courtesy of American Legion Post 47)

The Post 47 contest is open to all high school students in Livermore, with the winner receiving a $250 prize and the opportunity to compete at the district level.

The multi-stage competition will culminate with the national finals at Hilldale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, in May. The winner of the national competition will receive a $25,000 scholarship.

Contestants will be asked to speak for three to five minutes on the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution and either Articles III, IV, or VI.

The Post 47 contest will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Livermore Veterans Hall, 522 S. L St.

For more information, contact Roy Warner at 925-980-6938 or rwarner323@yahoo.com.

Students must register and provide the title of their oration by Saturday, Dec. 20. For more information, contact Roy Warner at rwarner323@yahoo.com.

SNAP

(Continued from front page)

As of this week, the website of CalFresh — the California program under SNAP — stated, "Starting soon (date to be determined), under these new federal rules, certain people will have to meet CalFresh work requirements to get or keep their CalFresh benefits."

Local food-assistance programs, such as the Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB), are bracing for the cuts in federal benefits.

"Food banks like ACCFB will be affected by the new SNAP work requirements because more community members who relied on SNAP benefits to buy their groceries are now turning to the food bank for support," said Cady Osgood-Otis, ACCFB marketing and communications manager. "We are hearing an estimated 15,000-20,000 community members are being affected in Alameda County. Demand is still very high given these SNAP cuts taking effect, the continued rising cost of living and the lingering effects for many of the government shutdown. In addition, we are in the holiday season which is the busiest time of year at the food bank."

The new legislation incentivized capital investments, added tax breaks for small businesses and increased the lifetime gift-tax exemption to $15 million, among other provisions. The benefits came at the expense of large cuts to food assistance, health care, education programs and student-loan services.

"It's an abomination," Tri-Valley Congressman Eric Swalwell said following his vote against the bill. "It's the largest transfer of wealth, kicking 15 million people off their health care so that the wealthiest among us can have the biggest tax cut."

Swalwell also criticized admissions from Congressional representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene, Mike Flood and Scott Perry that they did not completely read an earlier version of the bill.

Congressional Democrats on Nov. 18 introduced a bill that would repeal the SNAP cuts enacted by the GOP's July legislation. More than 190 House Democrats, including Swalwell, and every Democratic Senator have supported the Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act of 2025.

"At every opportunity, Republicans have chosen to target and decimate the programs that feed people," said Connecticut Representative Jahana Hayes, who sponsored the bill. "The Big Beautiful Bill implemented the largest cut to SNAP in history — putting the most vulnerable at higher risk of hunger. Republicans have proven that cruelty is the point. During the government shutdown, all of America watched as they once again chose to use hunger as a weapon and blocked emergency funding for SNAP — marking the first-ever lapse in funding. With the Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act, we can reverse the damage caused by this legislation and restore the nearly $200 billion eliminated from SNAP."

The new SNAP requirements come shortly after an unprecedented lapse in SNAP benefits last month.

The federal government shut down from Oct. 1 to Nov. 12 as Republicans and Democrats failed to agree on an appropriations bill, leading to furloughed federal employees throughout the shutdown's 43 days, the longest in U.S. history.

In mid-October, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the Trump administration, announced that it would, for the first time in the 86-year-old program's history, halt SNAP funding. The USDA attempted to blame the halt on Democrats despite federal courts pointing to funds already available to continue SNAP.

Although legislators restored funding on Nov. 12, they only extended funding for many federal programs, such as public-health programs, through Jan. 30. At that point, the government will face another possible shutdown if lawmakers fail to agree on longer-term appropriations.

SALMON

(Continued from front page)

Since its inception in 1999, the restoration group's 15 local, state and federal agencies have worked to return steelhead trout, a threatened species, to the Alameda Creek watershed. The group has removed dams, built fish ladders and improved riparian habitat along the creek.

This fall's project, led by group member Pacific Gas & Electric, remediated the last unnatural barrier on the creek's mainstem, burying a gas pipeline crossing the creek in Sunol Valley upstream of I-680.

"We just wrapped up construction, and the fish are already finding their way home," Buchanan said following the salmon sightings. "It's incredibly gratifying to see these incredible species reclaim crucial habitat that they have been locked out of for decades."

Alameda Creek Alliance Director Jeff Miller said, "The return of salmon heralds hope for more healthy ecosystems, and these charismatic fish are excellent ambassadors for protecting and restoring our local watershed. We're seeing results from two decades of restoration projects, and we hope Alameda Creek will have an outsized impact on recovery of steelhead trout in the region. It's profoundly gratifying to see watershed residents and local water agencies taking pride in bringing back native fish and wildlife."

Although the group has worked to protect steelhead, "the Chinook just showed up first," said Joseph Sullivan, fisheries program manager at the East Bay Regional Park District, another workgroup member. "We see Chinook usually come in earlier than steelhead. They come in October, November, December. Steelhead come usually in January, February, March. So, it's just been a product of us restoring steelhead that we're starting to see Chinook salmon also coming into the system."

Salmon, like steelhead, are anadromous, meaning they migrate between rivers and the sea throughout their lifecycle. They lay their eggs in fresh water, where the young fish develop before they migrate to the ocean.

"The young juvenile salmon will then move out to the ocean where they have a lot more access to rich food resources, so they can get really big," Sullivan said. "They stay in the ocean for approximately three to four years and then will return historically to the same stream where they were born. I make that point because they haven't been born in Alameda Creek for over 75 years. What we're seeing now are hatchery strays."

Because humans often transplant hatchery fish into the bay, the fish lose their natural homing abilities and instead follow flushes of fresh water when it's time to spawn.

"We see hatchery fish entering almost every stream in the bay just because they sense fresh water with these big rains, and they're waiting for that big queue of fresh water," Sullivan said. "They're just going to whichever stream that attracts them first."

Salmon migrations can exceed 1,000 miles. Once returning adults reach freshwater, they stop feeding.

While the group has not reported any sightings beyond Sunol Valley, Buchanan said she looks forward to the next big rain, which may attract even more fish, including the first steelhead of the season.

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

at a surcharge of $100/person to enter a national park. This extreme increase in fees will impact the surrounding communities near national parks by discouraging foreign visitors.

My senior pass for the America the Beautiful Pass for the National Parks and Federal Parks and Federal Lands Pass was a onetime fee for the rest of my life. I saw no mention of a senior pass. All I saw was a yearly pass for residents that cost $80/year for U.S. residents. That is a high cost for those on very low incomes and does not encourage low-income families to visit national parks and monuments. The parks should be available and accessible to all, not just to those who are well-off enough to afford it.

Furthermore, the current administration is assaulting existing national monuments by eliminating them or decreasing their range. The current administration and the POTUS should be ashamed of their treatment of our national treasures —our national parks; and opening federal lands to logging and oil drilling when we should be relying more on sustainable wind power and solar energy rather than on fossil fuels that are accelerating climate change. The current administration has defunded green energy projects in many states, not just in California.

Valley Flooding Questions

Kenneth Henneman, Pleasanton

Answers to questions arising from my last week's letter on Valley Flooding. Remembering the damages from the 2022-2023 5"/day Dublin rainfall; the questions were largely about the big 1955 flood.

What I said? That if Del Valle Reservoir had been built by 1955, and was full, and 2" of rain had then fallen at the very end of the storm, floodwater over Hopyard Rd. could have been a FOOT HIGHER, flooding an additional 3-4,000 acres. The letter was sent using the 2" value after reading about the 2" flood storm in Los Angeles.

Was the 1955 flood the biggest on record? Yes, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that designed Del Valle Reservoir after the flood (1961 report).

How many acres along Arroyo de la Laguna in West Pleasanton were flooded? About 6,000 acres.

How deep was the water on Hopyard Rd.? My wife drove to Pleasanton through 1:500 year (a 0.2% probability size); one day rainfalls are occurring more frequently and more intensely in the last 40 years, causing significant damage from mega size floods.

Examples? Studies and news reports reveal that in the last ~ 40 years, mega, largest ever, flooding is occurring in the USA and all over the world. New England had three 1:100 year floods in one year! Large floods are now occurring 2-3 times more frequently than previously.

Was our 2022-2023 flood an example? Yes. The unexpected 5"/day Dublin rainfall is a perfect example. Artificial Intelligence, using historic federal rainfall records, indicates a 5" rain could occur about every 300 years. However, importantly, federal probability values are based, erroneously, on historic long-term records, not recent 40-year records; which perhaps indicate it was a ~1:500 year, or 0.2%,event. Very surprisingly, Corte Monterey Street in Pleasanton briefly flooded, I believe the only time since 1955.

Our excellent emergency flood warnings are based largely on historic, not recent, rainfall records. A >1955 size flood will occur when water overflows DV Reservoir spillway, which is expected to happen 2-3 times more often.

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews To Host Hanukkah Festivities

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews will host a family-friendly Hanukkah celebration in Castro Valley from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish festival that commemorates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem after almost 400 years of Ptolemaic Dynasty rule of Isreal. Also known as the Festival of Lights, the religious holiday celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and spirituality over materiality and is marked by the daily lighting of a candle on a menorah.

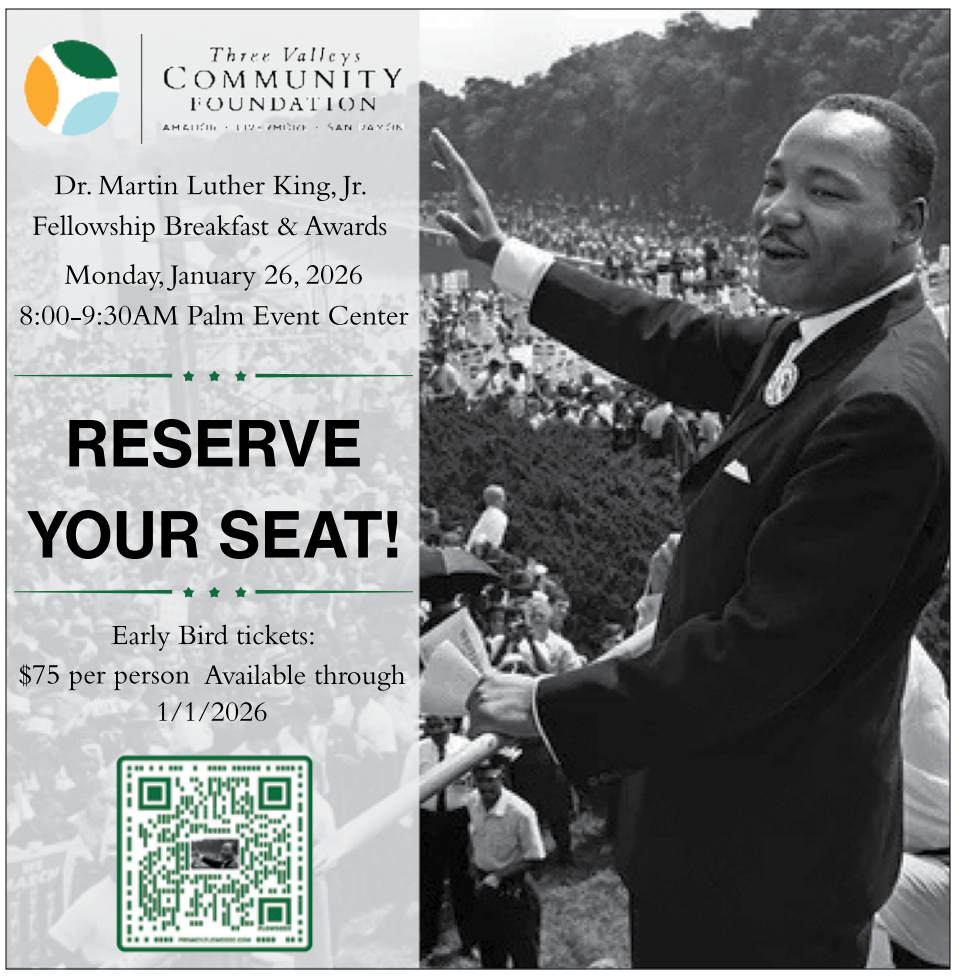
This year, Hanukkah begins at sundown on Sunday, Dec. 14, and continues through Monday, Dec. 22.

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews is a secular organization for anyone who identifies as Jewish through family, culture or history.

The local celebration will include candle lighting, storytelling, latkes, and hands-on crafts and games for all ages.

To sign up, email culturaljews@gmail.com or call 925-399-8029. The location will be provided at registration.

The event is free for members, with a $15 donation requested for non-members.



Ballet Company To Present a Christmas Performance

The Ballet Roots Dance Company will present its annual production, "Christmas with Ballet Roots," at the Livermore High School Theater, 600 Maple St., on Saturday, Dec. 13.

The family-friendly production will showcase the Pleasanton-based ballet troupe's repertoire of classical and contemporary dance, along with a guest performance by The Academy of Danse Libre, which features historical dance forms from the Victorian era to Ragtime and The Roaring 20s.

Performances are scheduled for 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

"We are thrilled to bring 'Christmas with Ballet Roots' back to the Tri-Valley community," said Talia Fallis, artistic director for the Pleasanton-based ballet company. "This performance is designed to be a perfect family outing, a delightful mix of classic and innovative dances that celebrates the joy and spirit of the holiday season."

The Academy of Danse Libre, based in Mountain View, California, has also appeared with the Joffrey Ballet in San Francisco.

Tickets are $25 and are available online at balletroots.org.



LARPD has been recognized by the Bay Area Public Pool Operators Association for its Outstanding Program for 2025 under the leadership of Recreation Coordinator Alyssa Smith and Recreation Supervisor Patrick Lucky. (Photo courtesy of LARPD)

LARPD Aquatics Receives Outstanding Program Award

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) has received the Bay Area Public Pool Operators Association's award for Outstanding Program for 2025.

The award recognizes the LARPD aquatic program for transitioning from a traditional American Red Cross lifeguarding curriculum to a scenario-based program developed by StarGuard Elite that focuses on prevention and real-world response.

Based in Windermere, Florida, StarGuard works with cities, park districts, waterpark resorts and cruise lines to develop training programs, conduct onsite safety audits and offer operational support for aquatic programs.

LARPD said it selected StarGuard because of its emphasis on situational awareness, teamwork and proactive measures that directly support safety across LARPD facilities.

Led by Recreation Supervisor Patrick Lucky and Recreation Coordinator Alyssa Smith, the LARPD aquatics staff implemented the program with a focus on preparedness and consistent skill development. The team also shared their transition process with other agencies at a recent BAPPOA meeting.

"Our goal is to give the community the highest level of safety we can," Lucky said. "This training model helps lifeguards respond more effectively, stay engaged and work together so families who visit our pools can feel confident in the protection we provide."

LARPD operates parks, trails and other recreational facilities in eastern Alameda County, including the Robert Livermore Aquatic Center and May Nissen Swim Center in Livermore.

DSRSD

(Continued from front page)

more than 20 billion gallons of wastewater, helping prevent harmful algal blooms, the district said.

Engaging the community and building strong partnerships have been central to DSRSD's success.

While Pleasanton and Livermore operate their own recycled water systems, DERWA works with the cities of Dublin and San Ramon to educate residents, coordinate infrastructure upgrades and promote water reuse across the region.

That collaboration was recognized in 2017 when the City of Dublin won WateReuse California's "Recycled Water Customer of the Year" award after being nominated by DSRSD.

The district also focused on public outreach. Early initiatives such as "Puttin' on the Green" and signage at irrigation sites highlighted the benefits of using recycled water.

During the 2012–2016 drought, DSRSD opened the Bay Area's first residential recycled water-fill station, allowing residents to collect water for outdoor use. Though the station no longer operates, it played a key role in building public awareness and laying the foundation for DERWA and other regional programs.

DSRSD said one ongoing challenge is keeping recycled-water programs aligned with changing community needs. As homes become more water-efficient and residents conserve water, less wastewater is available for recycling.

To address this, the district has partnered with regional agencies to stretch supplies and plan ahead.

In 2021, DSRSD participated in a pilot program to treat wastewater from the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District to meet peak irrigation demand. Officials said the pilot's success has encouraged similar collaborations to expand recycled water production.

Looking ahead, DSRSD is exploring ways to stretch its recycled water supplies and secure supplemental sources.

These efforts will allow the district and its partners to expand the system and connect with new customers. The district is also working with neighboring water and wastewater agencies on long-term strategies to maximize reuse, improve drought resilience and further reduce nutrient discharges into San Francisco Bay.

In 2026, DERWA will celebrate 20 years of delivering recycled water to schools, parks, golf courses and other public spaces.

The district has installed advanced meters that track irrigation by the hour and upgraded treatment systems that use 35% less energy.

"This award recognizes decades of collaboration and innovation," DSRSD General Manager Jan Lee said in a statement. "Our recycled water program is a model of how local partnerships can strengthen water reliability and sustainability across the region."

Founded in 1953, DSRSD serves roughly 194,600 people, providing potable and recycled water to Dublin and San Ramon's Dougherty Valley, collecting and treating wastewater in Dublin and south San Ramon, and treating wastewater for Pleasanton under contract.

DSRSD was honored earlier this year at the Water Environment Federation's annual conference.



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TSUNAMI

(Continued from front page)

get an accurate solution, but only in a fraction of a second," Kolev said. "We are able to do this because we exploit a special mathematical structure of the problem that allows us to split the computation into offline and online phases. The offline phase only needs to be done once per region to prepare a local model of the sensor network and the seafloor. This is the part that requires a big machine like El Capitan, but once computed, we store the results and can use just a single computer during prediction."

Awarded by the Association for Computing Machinery, the Gordon Bell Prize recognizes achievement in high-performance computing, with emphasis on innovative applications in science, engineering and large-scale data analytics.

The team used data from seafloor pressure sensors from Northern California to British Columbia to link seafloor motion with earthquake characteristics, tsunami arrival times and wave heights. The resulting simulations also provide quantified confidence estimates for emergency managers.

"Our work shows that physics-based models of earthquakes and tsunami generation are now fast enough to guide real-time response, which not only improves early warning for the Pacific Northwest, but also points the way toward global, physics-based earthquake and tsunami early warning systems," said Alice-Agnes Gabriel, an earthquake seismologist and associate professor at the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics at Scripps.

LLNL, in collaboration with the National Nuclear Security Administration, Hewlett Packard Enterprise and Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., launched El Capitan in November 2024 as the fastest computer in the world, capable of 2.79 billion calculations per second at peak performance.

Last month's latest edition of the Top 500 List, which tracks the world's most powerful computer systems, once again ranked El Capitan in the top spot, followed by the Frontier system at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and the Aurora system at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois.

The tsunami-forecasting team took advantage of a brief window following El Capitan's launch, during which LLNL opened the supercomputer to public research. The system transitioned to national-security work this spring, and its hardware will remain classified until its decommissioning and destruction.

Looking ahead, the researchers said they will work to integrate with operational tsunami-warning centers and expand their coverage to other geophysical hazards, such as landslides, while also extending their modeling to more regions.

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PLEASE HELP BRING MIGUEL HOME



Miguel Lopez left in the photo, next to his son, Julian Lopez, and his wife, Rosa Lopez.

Livermore Wente Winery worker, married father of three and grandfather

Miguel Lopez

remains in Mexico after having been illegally deported in early June.

To donate to a GoFundMe account supporting the Lopez family, visit

https://www.gofundme.com/f/bring-miguel-back-to-his-loved-ones

Open Enrollment for Livermore Schools Begins

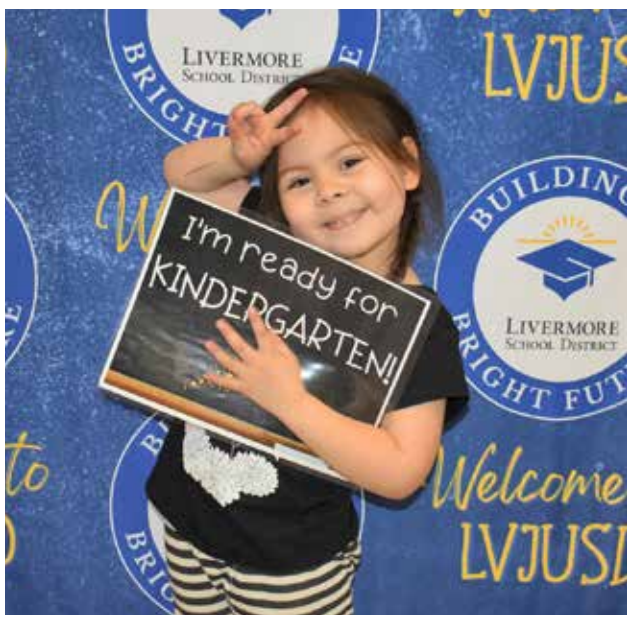
By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) on Dec. 1 announced that open enrollment for the 2026-27 school year has officially begun.

LVJUSD is encouraging families with students entering Transitional Kindergarten (TK), Kindergarten or any grade level for the first time to apply immediately. Details outlining the process can be found at: www.livermoreschools.org/newstudentenrollment.

The district's website provides informational videos in both English and Spanish that outline each step of the enrollment process and list the required documents and immunizations that students must have prior to becoming fully enrolled.

In addition to the early enrollment window, LVJUSD will host its annual enrollment fair from 1:30-5:30 p.m. Jan. 28-29 at the Robert Livermore Community Center (4444 East Avenue).



A soon-to-be Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) student is eager to set out on an academic journey. New-student enrollment opened this week, with the district encouraging families with new or transferring students to begin the process now. (Photo courtesy of LVJUSD)

The fair will give parents and guardians of new students the chance to submit required enrollment documents, meet principals and school staff (including bilingual staff), and learn about the programs offered by individual schools and LVJUSD.

There will be representatives on hand from child nutrition, health services, before- and after-school programs, healthcare partners and the Livermore Library to share information and answer questions about their services for students and families. Both days will provide identical support and resources.

"Enrolling a child in school, especially for the very first time, can feel like a big step, and we want families to know they don't have to navigate it alone," said Tracie Christmas, director of student services. "Our enrollment fair brings all of our resources and staff together in one place so parents and guardians can get their questions answered and feel confident in joining the LVJUSD community."

Families unable to attend the fair may submit required documents at their school of residence beginning Feb. 2.

Although LVJUSD makes every effort to place students at schools within their respective neighborhood boundaries, if space is not available at their home school, students will be placed at another school until space becomes available.

LVJUSD has a policy in which students can, if space is available, attend a school of their choosing. To request enrollment at an LVJUSD school outside of a student's boundary, an intra-district transfer request must be made. Transfer requests for current LVJUSD students are granted if space is available in the grade level requested.

During this year's early enrollment phase, priority intra-district transfer requests can also be submitted through Dec. 19 on the district's website at Intra-District Transfer Request Form. Students must already be enrolled or have completed a new-student enrollment form online in order for an intra-district transfer request to be processed.

Requests for both new enrollment and intra-district transfers received by Dec. 19 will be given priority consideration based on space availability. For more details on enrollment for the 2026-27 school year, visit the LVJUSD website at www.livermoreschools.org/enrollment.

Tri-Valley Offers Myriad Festive Holiday Activities

By Hannah Ferguson

TRI-VALLEY — Options for celebrating the holidays in the Tri-Valley abound.

Below are some of the many activities taking place in the region.

Dublin Tree Lighting

The City of Dublin will light its holiday tree at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 4. The event features performances by local school choirs and bands, arts and crafts, letters to Santa, hot chocolate and cookies. The celebration will be at the Civic Center, 100 Civic Plaza.

Carnegie Park Holiday Village

Carnegie Park (2155 Third Street, Livermore) will transform into a magical holiday village from 4-8 p.m. each day beginning Friday, Dec. 5.

Pleasanton Holiday Celebration

The City of Pleasanton will host its holiday parade at 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, followed by the tree lighting at about 6:45 p.m. on Main Street. There will be floats, marching bands, Santa and more.

Livermore Parade, Tree Lighting

Livermore will host its Holiday Sights and Sounds parade, including floats and performances from local bands, schools, clubs and businesses, downtown at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6.

Dourov Light Display

An interactive light display and snow machine at 467 Knottingham Circle in Livermore offers visitors the opportunity to walk around on the property, in the driveway and onto the porch, to see all the attractions, which include a nativity scene and virtual Santa. Music is available on 107.9-FM. Hours are 5-10 p.m. daily through Dec. 27.

Holidays in the Vineyards

Nearly 20 wineries will decorate their tasting rooms for the holidays from 12 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6 and Sunday, Dec. 7. Guests can enjoy special wines, music, arts and crafts, and more. A map of participating wineries is available on lvwine.org.

Concerts and Shows

The Bankhead Theatre in Livermore will present holiday performances this month including Pink Martini, Irish Christmas in American, Christmas Dreaming with Stella Cole, The Nutcracker, and Campana Sobre Campana: Christmas in Mexico. Tickets are available at livermorearts.org.

Dublin Tree Lane

Families, individuals, schools and businesses are competing in a new tree-decorating contest at the Dublin Civic Center (100 Civic Plaza). Decorated trees will be on display from Dec. 4-28.

KR Farms Winterland

A new winter event includes an ice-skating rink, train rides through holiday lights, miniature golf, theater, arcade, alpine trees for sale, Elf Cafe, fire pits for rent and a slide at 5000 Arnold Road in Dublin. Open seven days a week.

Holiday Giveaway Program

Tri-Valley Haven is continuing its tradition of supporting local households in need with food, stockings and gift cards. Information on donating can be found at trivalleyhaven.org.



Winter Glow, billed as a "magical drive-through holiday light-show experience" for the whole family, is open through Jan. 4 at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, 2005 Valley Avenue, Gate 12. The "enchanting, mile-long spectacle" features more than 100 festive light displays, which visitors experience in roughly 30-45 minutes alongside a curated holiday soundtrack from the warmth of their cars. Tickets, at $22.90 per vehicle, are available at https://winterglowexperience.com/. (Photo courtesy of Fever)

Senior Center Hosts Dance

Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Boulevard, will host the annual Holiday DancEscape from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5.

The evening is open to those 21 and older and will feature live music provided by The CoolTones Big Band.

Light refreshments will be served.

The cost is $12 for residents and $15 for non-residents with pre-registration, or $20 at the door.

For more information, call the Dublin Senior Center at 925-556-4511.



TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, Dec. 5
RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
The City of Dublin will host an American Red Cross Blood Drive on Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Bray Room at the Civic Center, 100 Civic Plaza. Please consider donating a pint if you are able. One donation can save up to three lives! Visit RedCrossBlood.org to register. Use the code "DublinCommunity," or zip code 94568 to find Dublin's drive.

Saturday, Dec. 6
HOLIDAY BOOK SALE
Friends of the Dublin Library, Inc., will present its annual Holiday Book Sale on Dec. 6, noon to 3:00 p.m., at the Dublin Library, 200 Civic Plaza. You will find a great selection of beautiful books in excellent condition. Choose from adult, teen, and children's books, holiday themed books, book sets, games, puzzles, and more. Children's books will be paired with matching stuffed animals! Many items are specially priced. Credit, debit, cash and checks accepted. For more information, contact Dublin Library, (925) 803-7252, or dublinfriends.org

Sunday, Dec. 7
THE GOLDEN FOLLIES
The Golden Follies return with their spectacular Holiday Performance — a dynamic Las Vegas–style revue featuring an exceptional ensemble of senior performers. Enjoy high-energy dance routines, dazzling costumes, and a timeless holiday repertoire that will fill you with cheer. On Dec. 7 at 1 p.m. at the Dublin Senior Center; $10 per person. Seating is limited; purchase your tickets early at the Senior Center front desk or online today.

Monday, Dec. 8
LIVERMORE-AMADOR GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING
Come hear Madeline Yanov, owner of Time Travel Genealogy, speaking on "What did Daddy (and Mommy) Do? Locating Family Members in Old Business Records — Part II". Part II delves deeper regarding ancestors who worked in specific industries such as railroads, mining, garment factories, farming, and civilian government roles, as well as those involved in unions. No charge, visitors welcome. In-person at Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton, or via ZOOM (see flyer on website to register: www.l-ags.org, click on Speakers & Topics on upper left) on Dec. 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 11
LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY GARDEN CLUB
The December meeting will be Herb Gardening in the Winter/ Holiday Potluck and Social. The speaker, Tabbitha Cawelti from Alden Lane, will be teaching that even though it is winter, gardeners need their hands in the dirt! This can be accomplished by planting herbs and vegetables for the season. Members, please provide a dish to share. Last name assignment: A-D sweet treats, E-L cold side dish, M-P hot side dish, Q-R non-alcoholic beverage. S-Z finger foods. On Dec. 11, 6 to 8 p.m., at Crosswinds Church, 1660 Freisman Rd., Livermore at the red Farm Theater Building.

Friday/Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13
VALLEY CONCERT CHORALE'S HOLIDY CONCERT
The Valley Concert Chorale opens its 2025-2026 season with "An American Holiday: Christmas Choral Music from the Americas", featuring songs from Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, and the U.S. The two performances will be held Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. at Lynnewood Methodist Church, 4444 Black Ave., Pleasanton and Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., at Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave., Livermore. Tickets are $30. College students are $10 with valid student ID. Children K-12 are free. Advance tickets may be purchased by visiting www.valleyconcertchorale.org, or by calling (925) 866-4003.

Saturday, Dec. 13
NARNIA BALLET
Radiance School of Ballet will be presenting "Narnia - The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" at Las Positas College's Mertes Theater on Dec. 13. There will be two performances: 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Radiance School of Ballet is a local nonprofit classical ballet school based in Dublin. See radianceballet.com for more information.

Saturday, Dec. 13
CHRISTMAS WITH BALLET ROOTS
Pleasanton's Ballet Roots Dance Company announces the return of its annual production, "Christmas with Ballet Roots". The festive, family-friendly production showcases the company's diverse repertoire, blending stunning classical ballet with lively contemporary pieces. Showtimes are at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Dec. 13 at the Livermore High School Theater, 600 Maple St. Tickets are available at balletroots.org/events.html. For more information, visit www.balletroots.org.

Sunday, Dec. 14
ASHBURY CHRISTMS CONCERT
Asbury United Methodist Church is excited to present its annual Christmas concert on Dec. 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary at 4743 East Ave., Livermore. The concert will feature performances by the Asbury Bell Choir, Children's Choirs, Adult Choir, and several of Asbury's talented instrumentalists. Childcare will be provided for young children; please RSVP. A homemade cookie reception will follow. A free will offering can be made at the door. The concert will also be live-streamed on asburylive.org and the Asbury UMC YouTube channel (@AsburyLivermore). For more information or to RSVP, please contact (925) 447-1950 or email office@asburylive.org.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES
FOOD RELIEF SERVICES
Local residents can access vital food-assistance services to help meet basic needs. Food relief services can be found at:

Children's Emergency Food Bank; 7421 Amarillo Rd., Dublin; appointments M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 925-828-5363;

St. Raymond Catholic Church, 11555 Shannon Ave., Dublin; third Sat. of the month, 8 to 11 a.m.;

Open Heart Kitchen; M-F, 1 to 5 p.m.; 450 N. Livermore Ave., Livermore; Tri-Valley Haven Food Pantry , 150 N. "L" Street, Livermore; 925-449-1664 — M-Th, 1 to 5 p.m.; Fri/Sat 12 to 4 p.m.;
Alameda County Community Food Bank; 510-635-3663; M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

COAT DRIVE
Gene Morgan Insurance Agency is holding its annual Warm Coat Drive to benefit local citizens in need. New or gently used coats, especially for children, will be accepted at their downtown office, 2020 Fourth Street in Livermore, now through Dec. 5. Office hours are 9-12, and 1-5 p.m. After hours drop-offs may be arranged in advance. Please call 925-447-2565 x2120 to make an appointment. For more information, contact Stacie Logan at stacie@genemorganinsurance.com.

ONGOING EVENTS
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
In AA, we don't tell anyone to do anything. We talk about our own drinking, the trouble we got into, and how we stopped. To find a local meeting in person or online, visit valleyservicecenteraa.org or call the 24-hour hotline at 925-829-0666.

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

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

Email non-profit events to calendar@independentnews.com for newspaper calendar and visit our website www.independentnews.com to promote all events online.

Valley Humane Offers Free Pet Care

Valley Humane Society (VHS) will offer free pet spaying and neutering by appointment at the Phil Scholz Surgery Center in Pleasanton from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7.

VHS is one of five Bay Area organizations offering free pet healthcare services during a weekend Champions for Pet Health event sponsored by La Russa Rescue Champions, Dave & Cheryl Duffield Foundation, Maddie's Fund, and the Bissell Pet Foundation.

Tony La Russa, the former professional baseball player and manager whose teams won three World Series, will also be at the VHS surgery center, 120 Spring St., to promote accessible veterinary care.

The La Russa family formed Alamo, California-based La Russa Rescue Champions earlier this year to provide financial support for animal rescue organizations.

Also participating in the weekend event are the San Francisco SPCA, Berkeley Humane Society, Humane Society of Silicon Valley, and Contra Costa County Animal Services.

Organizers hope to spay or neuter more than 600 dogs and cats over the weekend. Some organizations will also be offering free vaccinations and microchip implants.

Dublin Police Urge Shoppers To Be Vigilant

Dublin police are urging residents to be aware of "porch pirates" who try to steal home deliveries, especially during the holiday gift season.

Dublin Police Services suggests that homeowners invest in a personal package locker or an Amazon locker for package deliveries, or have packages delivered to their workplace.

During the holiday season, Dublin will also deploy additional police resources to patrol crowded commercial areas as part of a Holiday Crime Suppression Detail.

The additional resources will include marked and unmarked patrol vehicles and officers on bicycle and foot patrol. Additional traffic patrols will also be on the lookout for those driving under the influence.

Dublin police also encourage shoppers to park in well-lit areas, as close as possible to the shops, and to not leave packages, shopping bags or valuables in plain sight. Be sure that windows are tightly closed and all doors locked.

Shoppers should also be aware of their surroundings and cautious of any strangers who may be approaching, regardless of their reason.

Shoppers should also avoid carrying large amounts of cash, pay with check or credit card, and carry purses under their arms. Wallets should be kept in front pants pockets or inside coat pockets, according to police.

Suspicious activity can be reported by calling 9-1-1 or the Dublin Police Services non-emergency line, 925-462-1212.

Dublin To Honor Fallen Officer

Dublin will hold its annual memorial Christmas tree lighting in honor of fallen officer John Monego at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, in the lobby of Dublin Police Services, 6361 Clark Ave.

Monego, an Alameda County sheriff's deputy assigned to Dublin, was killed on Dec. 12, 1998, when he responded to a 911 robbery-in-progress call from a local steakhouse.

Monego was shot as he entered the lobby of the restaurant and then shot five more times as he lay on the floor, according to the California Police Officer's Memorial Association.

The shooter was later caught, convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Monego, 33, had been assigned to the city for eight months.

Dublin Accepting Letters to Santa

Children can now drop off letters to Santa Claus at Dublin City Hall, 100 Civic Plaza.

Letters deposited in Santa's Mailbox by Friday, Dec. 12, will receive a reply from Santa. The city said letters dropped off after Dec. 12 are not guaranteed a response.

Letters should include the child's name, wish list and home address.

SUPPORT

(Continued from front page)

"I always knew I wanted to serve others or care for others, so that led me to become a nurse," Thach said. "And then throughout, even before nursing, I volunteered in senior spaces. I just always had a heart for the older adult population. So, this (Senior Helping Seniors) was just another part of the calling."

Thach was also deeply inspired by her late grandparents.

"They were probably the root of everything," she said. "I really had a lot of respect for them, and they were just examples of engaged active seniors, and they didn't ever seem lonely. They were always cooking for us, the grandchildren, visiting relatives and engaging in their church and just, I don't know, they looked like they had fun."

The mission of seniors helping seniors resonates strongly with the couple.

"We really believe in the power of peer-to-peer connection," Macapinlac said. "We believe in deep and meaningful relationships, and we believe in shared life experiences. And it's just amazing … a lot of stories we're hearing … the seniors are actually becoming friends. So, both the caregiver and the client are equally benefiting."

In one such case, a 92-year-old widow was living alone in a large house and came to the couple after experiencing a fall.

"She really hired someone for companionship and also to help prevent her from falling and things like that, but what we noticed after just the first or second visit, she started getting up early in the morning again," Macapinlac said. "She started doing her makeup, putting on lipstick and doing her hair. She gets excited to start the day looking forward to meeting with her friend, her companion."

Thach believes in the power of these bonds for creating a sense of wellbeing.

"Because they're closer in age or have experienced shared common events, and probably also share a preference for similar music or TV shows from their era, they just have more to talk about," Thach said. "And it fosters companionship and connections and a better understanding of each other."

Seniors Helping Seniors, as a non-medical, in-home senior-care agency connecting seniors with their less active counterparts, provides services spanning companionship, transportation, light housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation and medication reminders, among other tasks.

"We also offer personal care if clients need it, like bathing, toileting, ambulation, transferring and dressing," Thach said. "Our goal is to just provide practical daily assistance and support in maintaining dignity and personal-hygiene needs."

Macapinlac stressed that while caregivers are paid competitive wages, "we specifically look for folks that have a loving, caring, compassionate heart — the heart of a volunteer. So that is part of it."

In fact, it's a huge part of it, Thach reiterated.

"The matchmaking part is crucial to a good relationship," Thach said. "So, we get to meet the clients, see what they need, what they require, and take into consideration their lifestyle and personality. And then we match them with the caregivers who help them."

The couple, both born and raised in Santa Clara, live in Livermore and plan to grow and raise their family in the Tri-Valley. Macapinlac said he hopes that their business will add to the community a resource to "help people live life on their own terms and help seniors live independently in the comfort of their own home with the dignity and respect they deserve."

Thach added, in conclusion, "The population is aging, and sometimes adult children are not nearby. So, we offer increased safety or social or cognitive stimulation to just provide peace of mind. Just lending a hand or an ear, really."

To learn more, visit seniorshelpingseniors.com

OBITUARIES

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Pauline Marie Maready

March 1, 1941 — Nov. 10, 2025

Polly passed away peacefully at her home in Pleasanton after an illness of four years. She is survived by Jack, her husband of sixty-two years. She also leaves behind a son, Jeffrey of San Francisco; a son, Brian (Wynde) of Colorado Springs; and a daughter, Melissa (Tim) of Wilmington, North Carolina. She is also survived by her five beloved grandchildren, Rylie, Vance, and Ellia of Colorado Springs and Caroline and Eliza of Wilmington, North Carolina. She also has one brother, Ed (Louann) of Sandersville, Georgia, and was preceded in death by her twin sister, Kathy O'Brien of Pleasanton, who passed away earlier this year.



Polly was born in the hamlet of Footdale, Pennsylvania to Margaret and Louis Rudziensky. Polly received many accolades for her academic achievements in school, and upon graduating, took a job at GEICO Insurance headquarters in Chevy Chase, Maryland. In 1960, she met her husband-to-be, Jack, who was serving in the Marine Corps at Quantico, Virginia. They were married in April of 1963 in Marlboro, Maryland.

In 1973, Polly and her family moved from the East Coast to the town of Pleasanton. They chose the area because of its friendly reputation and excellent school system. During the fifty-two years that followed, Polly became a vibrant, highly respected, and popular member of the community. In 1980, Sally Rayhill, the principal at Harvest Park Middle School, recruited Polly to be her secretary. When Pleasanton Middle School was built in 1990, Sally asked Polly to join her and help open the new school. At both schools, Polly made life-long friendships and truly loved the people she worked alongside. During Polly's tenure, she received awards for her teamwork, professionalism, and dedication.

Polly joined the Pleasanton Assistance League in 1990 as a charter member. Her friends remember her as a dedicated member who contributed countless hours to the many fine causes of this organization.

In 2002, Polly retired so that she and Jack could enjoy memorable cruises and travel to places such as Hawaii, New England, Ireland, Spain, and France — and of course to Colorado and North Carolina to see the grandkids. Although Polly loved to travel and had family spread out across the country, leaving Pleasanton and the close friends she had made over fifty-two years was never an option.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Pleasanton Senior Center on Saturday, Feb. 7, at 3:30 p.m. Her family invites the many friends and loved ones who Polly treasured to help celebrate the sweet memories we have of our kind, loving, and compassionate wife, mother, and friend.

Robert G Hickman

May 17, 1936 — Nov. 14, 2025

Robert G "Bob" Hickman, 89, passed away of cerebral atherosclerosis peacefully in Vancouver, Washington with his wife, Barbara by his side.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Bob was raised in the nearby community of Hales Corners by his parents, Gordon and Ethyl Hickman. Bob earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering with honors from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Bob, Barb, and their 6-month-old daughter, Beth moved to California so Bob could continue his academic journey. He went on to complete a Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley, marking the beginning of a distinguished career in chemical engineering.

After completing his doctorate, Bob worked for 13 months at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1965, he accepted a position at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. At LLNL, Bob held several roles within the Chemistry Department and contributed to numerous projects. Though he rarely spoke about the specifics of his work due to its sensitive nature, his dedication and integrity were evident to those around him. He and his family settled in Livermore, where he lived for nearly six decades before relocating to Vancouver in 2024.

Bob's career as a chemical engineer was marked by dedication and excellence. But beyond his professional life, he was a man of deep faith and service. In 1965, he and his family joined Our Savior Lutheran Church in Livermore. Over the years,



Bob served as an elder, usher, Sunday school teacher, and Stephen Minister. He also attended Holy Cross Lutheran Church. He cherished the friendships he made there which brought him great joy.

Bob's life was rich with hobbies and interests that reflected his curiosity and zest for life. He loved playing folk songs on his guitar and had an ear for both Johnny Cash and classical music. He played volleyball with colleagues during lunch breaks and shared a love of tennis with Barbara. A fan of sporty cars throughout his life, Bob took pride in vehicles like his '69 Camaro convertible, a Triumph, and most recently a red Geo Metro convertible with the playful license plate "KUTEKAR."

At home, Bob created treasured traditions for his family. The best part of every day was winding down to share a nice glass of wine each evening with Barb before dinner. That tradition continued even after they moved into their Assisted Living apartment in Vancouver, Washington.

In 2024, after nearly six decades in Livermore, Bob and Barb relocated to Vancouver to be closer to their oldest daughter and her family.

Bob was a devoted husband to Barbara for 67 years—a partnership built on love and mutual respect. Together they raised two daughters: Beth (Gaylen) and Brenda (Bill). He took immense pride in his grandchildren — Emily (Barnaby), Hillary, Jason, and Chris — and delighted in the arrival of his great-granddaughter Olive, who shared his birthday. The bond between Bob and Olive was especially dear to him.

He is also remembered fondly by his brother John and many nieces and nephews. Bob was preceded in death by his parents Gordon and Ethyl Hickman; his sister Joan; brother Bill; and great-grandson Phoenix.

Those who knew Bob will remember him as a kind-hearted man who gave generously of himself — to his family, friends, church community, and colleagues. His warmth touched many lives across generations.

May Bob Hickman's memory bring comfort to all who knew him and continue to inspire kindness and devotion in those whose lives he touched. The family would like to thank all the caregivers and staff at The Inn at University Village for their dedication and emotional support.

A memorial service will be held in Vancouver, Washington in January.

Evergreen Memorial Gardens is honored to be serving the Hickman family. An online guestbook is available for condolences at evergreenmemorialgardens.com.

Muriel F. Dean

July 14, 1939 — Nov. 13, 2025

Muriel Frechette Dean, 86 years old, passed away on Nov. 13 after a short illness. She was born in New York in 1939, one of three children of George Frechette and Mary Ustasiewska. She earned a BA at Rhode Island College and then a Master's degree in Radiation Biology at the University of Rochester. She moved to Los Alamos to work as a Health Physicist at Los Alamos National Laboratory in the early 1960s, where she met and married Phillip N. Dean.



In 1974, Muriel and Phillip moved to Livermore, California, where they lived for the rest of their lives. Muriel was a tireless supporter of the local arts community. She was active in many organizations including the Livermore Heritage Guild, the Bankhead Theater, the Livermore Art Association, the Ravenswood Progress League, Art in the Oaks, and other groups working to improve life in Livermore.

Another great interest was her Alaskan Malamutes. She raised several dogs and showed them in competitions throughout the West. She (and the dogs) earned many awards in both obedience and conformation. She served in leadership roles in the Alaskan Malamute Club of America and the Northern California Alaskan Malamute Association.

Muriel loved Livermore dearly, where she enjoyed a large circle of friends and was well known for her early morning walks in Sycamore Grove. Every morning, she would arrive at opening time and plant her car firmly at the entrance gate. Once outside, with her walker, she took off on a two-mile hike along one of her favorite routes. The friends she made there recently left bright yellow flowers in the park in her memory.

Muriel was loved and admired and will be greatly missed. She is survived by her son, Derek, and her two grandsons, Miles and Graham, of Hailey, Idaho. A celebration of life will be planned in early 2026.

Lillian Jacintha Howard

Dec. 2, 1928 — Nov. 24, 2025

Lillian Jacintha "Jackie" Kinney Howard was born Dec. 2, 1928, to William and Lillian Tate Kinney in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was predeceased by all her siblings: Mahlon, William (Bill), Marianne, Edward, Richard (Dick), and Robert.

She grew up in Sierra Madre, California, attended UCLA where she met Robert Howard and they married in 1953. She was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority. They lived in Pasadena, Santa Rosa, and Rialto, California as well as Bountiful, Utah before settling in Livermore to raise their seven children.



She later went on to work at Livermore Cyclery, the family business, and was a lifelong parishioner at St. Michael's Catholic Church.

She is survived by her children, Stephen (Melinda), Peter (Robin), Jeffrey (Jani), John (Julie), Ann and Daniel, as well as Gregory's wife Michele. Gregory predeceased her in 2018, and her husband of 40 years, Bob, predeceased her in 1993. She is also survived by 16 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held on Dec.11, 2025, at 10 a.m. at St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Donations in her memory may be sent to Hope Hospice or a charity of your choice.

Highly Touted Dons Show Well Against Prep Power

Amador Valley Boys Basketball Team Hangs with Arizona's Sunnyslope in Elite NorCal Tipoff Classic Matchup at Dublin

By Mitch Stephens

DUBLIN — One of the perks of his job, according to high-energy, sixth-year Amador Valley High School boys basketball coach Wilis Gardner, is getting to practice with the team.

The 39-year-old was a standout at Ohlone College and Colorado State before playing five seasons professionally in Germany.

"I get to play open gym with the young guys and stay in shape," Gardner said. "As long as I can keep up, and show and teach the kids some things, I'm going to keep doing it. I have to admit that every year it's getting a little harder. My time might be winding down."

Especially with this group.

The current pack of Dons might be the most talented in the storied program's history, so much so that CalHiSports had them No. 15 in their preseason California rankings and the third-best team in Northern California.

That's a major leap for a team that went 21-11 last season and a program that hasn't been among the NorCal elite since CalHiSports started doing state rankings in the 1980s.

Besides bringing back two dynamite 6-foot-2 guards in senior Cade Krueger, a San Jose State commit, and junior Jaylen Smith, who has multiple Division I college offers, the Dons hit the jackpot with a trio of transfers in 6-6 sharpshooter Arman Mahavni (from American-Fremont), 6-4 combo guard Elijah Stanley (Salesian-Richmond) and 6-8 power forward Cameron Anderson (Dublin).

The Dons showed they are worthy of the hype Nov. 29 in the 18th NorCal Tipoff Classic at Dublin, where they faced nationally ranked Sunnyslope of Phoenix, Arizona. Sunnyslope features 6-foot-10 post player Darius Wabbington and Colorado-bound Rider Portela, a 6-6 wing.

Amador Valley answered almost all the questions, hanging with the preseason No. 6 team in the country (according to MaxPreps) for more than three quarters before dropping a 66-53 contest.

Sunnyslope, which got 23 points from Portela, the son of the team's coach, led 33-29 at halftime, but Amador Valley was tied late in the third and trailed just 54-48 with 4:55 to go before fading down the stretch.

Much of that was due to the fact Anderson and Mahavri have yet to be ruled eligible. They were in street clothes.

Without a player taller than 6-3 in the rotation, the Dons simply couldn't match up for 32 minutes against the size and strength of Sunnyslope.

Gardner, who compiled a 63-57 record in his first five seasons at Amador Valley, would make no excuses. His team got 16 points apiece from the old guard of Smith and Krueger. Smith made four 3-pointers.

"As long as we play hard and compete, that's all I ask," Gardner said. "We definitely did that. I love that we battled to the finish with a bunch of 6-3 guys. That said, we definitely didn't execute on plenty of possessions. We have plenty of work to do."

As far as the sudden rise in ranking, Gardner, who assisted Quaran Johnson at Granada before replacing Adam Sax at Amador Valley, said "We can't hide that with the new pieces we have a lot more talent. We have some new guys who were really good players at previous places. We're hearing that Amador Valley is going to be this and that, but we're not buying into any of it. We haven't done anything yet. We've been at the bottom of the standings in the very, very tough EBAL. We'll remain humble and hungry."



Amador Valley guard Cade Krueger, shown during a 49-47 North Coast Section playoff loss to Redwood in Larkspur last season, tied for a team-high with 16 points against Sunnyslope of Phoenix, Arizona in a Nov. 29 game at Dublin. (Photo — Greg Jungferman)

Ronnie Flores, who has done state and national rankings for decades, was at the NorCal Tipoff event and isn't backing down from his preseason forecast.

"I obviously was projecting (Amador Valley) being at full strength and having all those transfers," he said. "They have a really good team even without all their guys. Smith is really good. He's terrific. He's fast, dynamic and can really shoot. They'll make some noise in that league, for sure."

As far as Kruger, Flores said: "Very tough. Heady. Rebounds really well for his size. He's a very good player."

Notes

Dublin was the only other Tri-Valley team in the event. The Gaels lost a tough 56-49 game to perennial state power Modesto Christian despite 12 points apiece from senior Aiden Li and junior Odin Chadiha.

Though who would have been the Gaels' top two returning players, Anderson and Jaiden Jones (to California-San Ramon), transferred, 19th-year Dublin coach Tom Costello likes his young squad.

"We defended and rebounded well (against Modesto Christian)," he said. "We're pretty green right now, but we play very hard. … We had four rotational players out that will make a difference for us going forward. This is a fun team to coach, and I'm looking forward to us getting better and better."

Livermore High Robotics Team Caps a Successful Campaign

By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — Livermore High School's robotics team, GravitechX, completed a successful 2025 season, taking home two wins and captaining three alliances, two of which took fourth place or better.

Its latest win in the First Robotics Competition (FRC) circuit, an international high school competition where students design, build and program robots to play a game, was at the MadTown Throwdown off-season event in Madera from Nov. 7-9.

At the season's closing event, GravitechX was selected to be part of Alliance 1, which won the first two rounds of the playoffs before losing in the fourth round. The team then gained a win in the fifth round, taking it to the best-of-three final against the third seed (a team's ranking).



The Livermore High School (LHS) robotics team took first place at the Contra Costa Regional Competition in April. (Photo courtesy of LHS)

Alliance 1 prevailed in the third and decisive match.

"To give one an idea of the level of play in this final, seven of the eight robots from these alliances went to the World Championships in 2025," team mentor Paul Armstrong said. "This included two of our alliance partners, who won the World Championship."

In FRC terms, an alliance is a group of robots working together in an effort to beat an opposing alliance. According to Armstrong, it is called an alliance because the word 'team' is already used to refer to the group behind a given robot. The way that FRC games are structured generally requires three robots working together to maximize scores.

Every match is played by three robots on the blue alliance, and they compete against three robots on the red alliance. All members of an alliance share the win/loss and associated ranking point for that match.

Additionally, an entire FRC season revolves around a single game that lasts an entire calendar year, including off season. This year's game was called "Reefscape" and was announced in January, along with a game animation and rule book, which this year consisted of 164 pages.

This began the "Build Season," a period that typically lasts eight to 10 weeks during which teams design, manufacture, wire and program their robot. GravitechX's robot, Ronan, took 10 weeks to complete and, like other robots, was designed with features to meet the specific requirements of this year's game.

Some of its key features include being able to climb, drive, reach (Ronan can reach more than 6.5 feet off the floor, enabled by a high-speed, two-stage elevator), and manipulate game pieces. Other details to note about Ronan are that it weighs 115 pounds without batteries, has a 30-by-30-inch base, a motor count of 14, and can swerve drive, meaning it can drive in any direction while facing another direction. To see the reveal video of GravitechX's 2025 robot, Ronan, visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7keNW53DHfc.

According to the team's advisor, Karen Fletcher, GravitechX is in its ninth year at Livermore High and currently consists of about 45 students from grades 9-12. There are two students who lead the team, and there are also student sub-team leads, all of whom go on to teach newer students.

Each sub-team is given its own responsibility. The mechanical sub-team is tasked with designing and building the robot, whereas the electrical sub-team oversees wiring the robot, and the programming sub-team codes it. GravitechX also has a large business sub-team to help with finding sponsors.

"Our sponsor base provides the financial and material resources that allow the students to learn and grow in their respective disciplines," Armstrong said. "This support has enabled us to continuously improve the sophistication and competitiveness of our robots."

Throughout the year, GravitechX participates in several outreach events, including Quest Science Center's Innovation Fair at Stockmen's Park. It also has a social-media presence.

"My experience on the team has been absolutely amazing," said Elizabeth Siemens, a junior and one of two electrical sub-team leads. "I've learned a lot, both about robotics and also about working on a team and being in a leadership position. It is absolutely a sport. We work, we compete and we cheer when we win because we've spent so much time and are so invested in it, like you would with any sport. I've also made a lot of good friends with people who I can relate to and have similar interests. FRC draws a certain kind of person, and the community is extremely friendly and supportive."

Simon Kozioziemski, a sophomore and one of the team's two programming sub-team leads, said, "The constant iteration of our design and engagement of many members contributed to our success this year. Instead of settling with one design, we continued iterating until we found a design that worked well. Additionally, the programming and electrical sub-teams did well at quickly adapting to mechanical changes."

Next year's FRC competitions are planned for March and April. They include both the FRC Sacramento District Event and the Contra Costa District Event, which are free and open to the public.

To learn more about GravitechX and view its robots, including this year's Ronan, visit: https://www.gravitechx.org/home.



Cal-Hi Sports Honors Mats' Star

By Mitch Stephens

TRI-VALLEY — Granada High School flag football coach Jared Muela knew before the season that he had something special in two-way standout Marin Lnenicka.

By the end of the season, so did everyone else.

So special, in fact, that 49ers Cal-Hi Sports named the senior receiver and linebacker the North Coast Section flag football player of the year.

Considering more than 100 schools play flag football in the NCS, that's no minor feat. Considering Lnenicka led her team to the NCS Division 1 championship game, her numbers were magnified.

She finished with 102 catches for 1,298 yards and 21 touchdowns, almost all from Katie Vail, the NCS leader in passing yards (4,315) and East Bay Athletic League offensive player of the year. Lnenicka's receiving yards ranked third in the section, just behind teammate Isabelle Dunn (1,428).

On top of that, Lnenicka, also a soccer standout, led the Matadors in tackles with 94, interceptions (nine) and pass deflections (16).

"Marin is a phenomenal athlete and does everything well," Muela said before the season. "She has great hands, is very steady, never gets too high or too low, but no moment is too big for her."

She proved that in four postseason games — three victories — with 25 catches for 221 yards and four touchdowns.

More honors

Foothill senior Paige Nelson, Granada senior Karly Bonaventure, Amador Valley freshman Alexis Makakhova and Dublin senior Krisha Patel were selected first-team All-EBAL in girls volleyball. Monte Vista-Danville junior Kennedy Whyte was picked as the player of the year.

First-team All-EBAL boys water polo players included Granada's Mason Woodward, Dublin's Colin Novenario, Amador Valley's Tyler Kaste and Foothill's Preston Cho, all seniors. Kaden Temores (Granada), Huseyn Huseynli (Amador Valley, Anthony Rocha (Dublin), Jake Berryhill (Foothill) and Blake Kelleher (Livermore) all earned second-team honors.

First-team All-EBAL girls water polo members included Amador Valley senior Susan Swyers, Dublin senior Lexi Esquivel, Foothill senior Natalie Williams and Granada junior Clara Rose. Among the second-teamers were Amador Valley senior Zahra Alami, Dublin senior Jenna Palattao, Foothill junior Nishika Rath, Granada junior Larissa Bolanos and Livermore senior Oliva Van Buuren.

State cross country

NCS cross-country boys team champion Dublin and Granada finished out the season with strong performances at the Nov. 29 CIF State meet in Clovis.

Granada finished ninth out of 24 Division II teams with 237 points, well back of winner Jesuit-Carmichael (52). The team's top two finishers over the rolling 3.1-mile course at Woodward Park were seniors Neil Ajeesh (15 minutes, 36.7 seconds) and Nicolai Barron (15:37.9). Granada's team time (combined top five finishers) was 1:18.55).

Dublin, the three-time defending NCS Division 1 champion, finished 11th in the D1 race with 272 points (Redondo Union-Redondo Beach won with 101 points). NCS individual champion Daniel Santhiapillai placed 16th in 15:13.8 and Gaels teammate Justin Feng was 27th (15:27.3).

Amador Valley's boys received strong performances from seniors Sattvik Raju (15:31.0) and Aiden Versteeg (15:37.2), while the team finished 17th in Division 2.

In the Division 2 girls race, Foothill sophomore Macy Mullins was 35th in 18:13.9.

Have high school varsity sports news of note? A good human-interest story? Email Mitch Stephens at mitch@scorebooklive.com

Holiday Shows To Complete Bankhead Presents Performances for This Year

Livermore Valley Arts will close out its 2025 Bankhead Presents performances at the Bankhead Theater with "Christmas Dreaming with Stella Cole" on Thursday. Dec. 18, "Campana Sobre Campana: Christmas in Mexico" on Monday, Dec. 22, and Matt Axton & Badmoon on New Years Eve.

Cole, who graduated from Northwestern University in Chicago with a degree in theater and international relations, launched her professional career during the Covid-19 pandemic by posting videos on Tik Tok. She now has more than 2 million followers on social media.

After moving to New York, her viral online fame led to performances at local clubs and restaurants and collaborations with other artists and groups, including Postmodern Jukebox, a musical collective known for reworking modern songs for vintage genres like 20th century swing and jazz.

Cole released a self-titled debut album in 2023, followed by "Snow!" in 2024 and "It's Magic" in 2025.

Her performance at the Bankhead Theater will include her interpretations of such holiday classics as "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "White Christmas," "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," and "Merry Christmas, Darling." Tickets to the 7:30 p.m. show start at $50.

"Campana Sobre Campana: Christmas in Mexico" will feature the Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar ensemble and Ballet Folklorico del Rio Grande in a retelling of the Christmas story that includes festive Mexican traditions and dance.

Tickets to the 7:30 p.m. performance start at $70.

Fronted by singer-songwriter Matt Axton, Badmoon will ring in the New Year with a soulful blend of Americana, including folk, rock and the blues.

The 7 p.m. New Years Eve show will include snacks and a 9 p.m. "bubbly toast," as it turns midnight on the East Coast. Livermore Valley Arts urges the audience to "dress to impress."

Tickets are $100 each, or two for $175.

Tickets for all three performances are available online at livermorearts.org, by calling 925-373-6800, or at the Bankhead Theater box office, 2400 First St.

Chorale Sets Two Holiday Concerts

Valley Concert Chorale (VCC) will open its 2025-2026 season with holiday concerts featuring songs from Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico and the U.S. at Lynnewood Methodist Church in Pleasanton on Friday, Dec. 12, and Asbury United Methodist Church in Livermore on Saturday, Dec. 13.

Both concerts will begin at 7:30 p.m.

"Our concerts will represent the amazing breadth of choral music from across the Americas," said VCC board president Sarah Allendorf. "Audiences will recognize many of the texts such as 'Mary Did You Know?' 'Hodie Christus Natus Est' and 'Angels We Have Heard on High' and more. Our concerts will be festive for everyone."

Tickets to "An American Holiday: Christmas Choral Music from the Americas" are $30, with discounts for college students with valid ID. Children 12 and under are free.

Tickets are available online at valleyconcertchorale.org or by calling 925-866-4003.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618603

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Nevada Fence Builder; 2. Norcal Fence Supply, 5340 Brisa ST, Suite B, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Zelvaggio Inc., 5340 Brisa ST, Suite B, 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: 10/24/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Luciano Zelvaggio, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 30, 2025. Expires October 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6609. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618709

The following person(s) doing business as: Pacific Medicine & Wellness, 15035 East 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94578 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nehal Ghevariya MD, PC, 15035 East 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94578. 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/: Nehal Ghevariya, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 6, 2025. Expires November 5, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6610. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618696

The following person(s) doing business as: Critter Control of Fremont, 39116 Fremont Hub #1015, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Kura Pest Control Services LLC, 114 Bald Eagle LN, Kyle, TX 78640. 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/: Sridhar Kura, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 5, 2025. Expires November 4, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6611. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618638

The following person(s) doing business as: Babe and the Moon, 2118 San ANtonio Ave, Alameda, CA 94501-4327 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Lindsey Trueman, 2118 San Antonio Ave, Alameda, CA 94501. 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: 9/17/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Lindsey Trueman, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 3, 2025. Expires November 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6612. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618572

The following person(s) doing business as: Storied Getaways LLC, 2779 Vernazza Dr., Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Storied Getaways LLC, 2779 Vernazza Dr., 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: 10/28/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Catherine Dawson, Principal. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 29, 2025. Expires October 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6613. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618650

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Lucky Z Beats; 2. Rushluck Media; 3. Rushluck Publishing, 6119 Ledgewood Terrace, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rushluck LLC, 6119 Ledgewood Terrace, Dublin, CA 94568. 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: 10/16/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Amitoz Dhillon, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 3, 2025. Expires November 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6614. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618612

The following person(s) doing business as: MGM Tax & Multiservices, 26250 Industrial Blvd, Suite 49, Hayward, CA 94545 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Marina Silva, 26250 Industrial Blvd, Suite 49, Hayward, CA 94545; Guillermo Rodriguez, 26250 Industrial Blvd, Suite 49, Hayward, CA 94545. This business is conducted by a Married Couple. 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/: Marina Silva, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 31, 2025. Expires October 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6615. Published November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618748

The following person(s) doing business as: Sleep Apnea Testing & Treament enter, A Division of BASS Medical Group, 2637 Shadelands DR, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. 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: 10/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rajiv Nagesetty, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 7, 2025. Expires November 6, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6616. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618845

The following person(s) doing business as: Ambassador Limo Service, 612 Brookfield DR, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ranjit Singh, 2552 Tennis LN, Tracy, CA 95377; Boota Singh, 612 Broofield DR, Livermore, CA 94551; Blawinder Singh, 2658 Cranston CR, Tracy, CA 95377. This business is conducted by a Co-Partners. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2009. Signature of Registrant/s/: Boota Singh, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 13, 2025. Expires November 12, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6617. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618618

The following person(s) doing business as: Victory Song Coaching, 2150 Portola Ave, STE D PMB 2028, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Victory Song Services LLC, 1401 21st Street, STE 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/: Victoria Rashe, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 31, 2025. Expires October 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6618. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618407

The following person(s) doing business as: JDS Design Build, 2052 Fourth Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jeffery Design Studio, LLC, 2052 Fourth 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Andrea Jeffery, Manager, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 21, 2025. Expires October 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6619. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618625

The following person(s) doing business as: Youth With Vision , 1065 Serpentine Lane, Suite 300, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Angel Garcia, 1065 Serpentine Lane, Suite 300, 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Angel Garcia. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 31, 2025. Expires October 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6620. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618171

The following person(s) doing business as: Bratpak Dog Kamp, 3841 First ST, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Archeyy & Friends LLC, 1008 Essex Avenue, Henderson, NV, 89015. 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: 2/26/2020. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sean C. Marler, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 9, 2025. Expires October 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6621. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619057

The following person(s) doing business as: Tabletop Builds, 1042 Spring Valley Cmn, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Christopher Lawson, 1042 Spring Valley Cmn, 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/: Christpher Lawson, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 21, 2025. Expires November 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6622. Published November 27, December 4, 11, 18, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618777

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618881

The following person(s) doing business as: Fresh Cut Christmas Trees, 2005 Valley Ave, Gate 8, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pacific Construction Sales, Inc., 157 La Sonoma Way, Alamo, CA 94507. 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/: Kevin S. Cuny, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 14, 2025. Expires November 13, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6624. Published December 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619150

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618577

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Livermore-Amador Symphony Concerts Celebrate the Season

By Jessica Zimmer

LIVERMORE — The Livermore-Amador Symphony will perform two holiday concerts Dec. 6 at the Bankhead Theater, the annual Free Family Concert, which is geared toward families and children, and a ticketed evening event.

The evening concert will feature Bay Area violist Jenny Douglass, as well as Tchaikovsky's "The Snow Maiden" and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's "Christmas Overture."

Both concerts promise to be exciting and filled with holiday spirit.

"The Free Family Concert, which will take place from 3-4 p.m., will include highlights from the Nutcracker, with dancers from Valley Dance Theatre on stage with the orchestra," Livermore-Amador Symphony conductor Lara Webber said. "The Symphony will also perform Sleigh Ride, sing-along songs from 'The Sound of Music,' Hanukkah songs, and 'The Dance of the Buffoons' from 'The Snow Maiden,' a magical fairy tale full of drama."

The evening concert, titled "Joyful Sounds of the Season," will begin at 8 p.m. It will include more selections from "The Snow Maiden," Douglass performing in "Suite for Viola and Small Orchestra" by Vaughan Williams, and "Christmas Eve Festivities" by Quinn Mason, an upcoming young composer.

"We often hear violin soloists, but it is a special treat to hear a viola soloist showcased," Webber said.

The viola has a smoky, rich sound.

"When Douglass plays the high notes, it's the sweetest sound in the world," Webber said.

The tie between Webber and Douglass goes back decades. The two musicians came to know one another when they attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music as undergraduates.

A highlight of both concerts will be the Livermore-Amador Symphony's new full set of chimes. The Symphony purchased the set in October 2024 with funding from a grant from the Alameda County Arts Commission, a donation from the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild and a separate grant from the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance.

"Those ringing bells are perfect for the winter holidays. Our percussionists will play them in two different festive Christmas overtures," said Anne Anaya, the Symphony's board president and a second violinist in the Symphony.

The music committee of the Symphony started discussions this fall about what pieces to play in the holiday concerts. The Symphony chose to feature music that has the spirit and joy of the holiday season but also offers something new.

"For example, another piece we'll play is 'Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite 1,' by Ottorino Respighi. He's a 19th-20th century Italian composer. In this piece, he took Baroque dances and gave them a refreshing modern twist," Webber said.

The holiday concerts mark the Symphony's first performances since the end of the 2024-2025 season in May.

"This is a reunion for us," Anaya said. "It's joyful to get back together after taking a break in the summer months. Between fall and spring, we play together almost every Tuesday night."

One of the community's favorite parts of the Free Family Concert is the "Instrument Petting Zoo," which takes place in the Bankhead lobby before the show.

"Children can touch and play instruments, guided by Symphony musicians," Webber said. "It's a way to introduce young students to music and performance. This tradition has been going on so long that we now have high school music students tell us they started playing an instrument after their first visit."

An extra feature of the evening concert will be intermission performances of holiday carols sung by the Cantabella Children's Chorus, which is based in Livermore.

If all the tickets for the Free Family Concert are reserved, the Symphony will also admit people on the waitlist and last-minute arrivals.

"We've never turned anyone away. We want to make this event accessible to the community," Webber said.

Webber will provide commentary during both concerts. She will not give her usual pre-performance talk at the evening concert because Dec. 6 is also the day of the City of Livermore's "Holiday Sights and Sounds Parade." Both the audience and performers are invited to a reception featuring Livermore Valley wines and hosted by the Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild in the lobby after the evening concert.

One change for the 2025-2026 season is the Symphony has started a donor-appreciation program.

"Events will include a pre-concert backstage tour to meet the musicians for Maestro Circle donors, and a gathering in the Founders Room, to socialize before the concert, as well as during intermission, for Concerto Club donors," Anaya said.

For information, visit: livermoreamadorsymphony.org.

Concert Notes

The afternoon concert is funded by Livermore Valley Arts. There is no cost to attend, but tickets are required. They are available online at livermorearts.org/events/las-free-family-concert-2025 or by calling (925) 373-6800. Tickets go fast. People on the waitlist always get in, with plenty of empty seats left over every year.

Tickets for the evening concert are available at the Bankhead ticket office, 2400 First Street, online at livermorearts.org/events/las-joyful-sounds-of-the-season/ or by calling (925) 373-6800. Tickets start at $31. Tickets for those younger than 22 are free.



The Armonia Choir of Cantabella Children's Chorus performs in the Livermore-Amador Symphony's 2024 holiday concert. (Photo courtesy of Cantabella Children's Chorus)

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Maddy Hudson Returns to the Tri-Valley, Reflects on Career

By Hannah Ferguson

LIVERMORE — After making it into the top 48 on the 14th season of American Idol in 2015, Pleasanton native Maddy Hudson has spent the past decade evolving as a singer-songwriter. Although Hudson performs all over California, she often returns to the Tri-Valley, most recently playing at Las Positas Vineyards on Nov. 28.

Hudson, 27, has had placements of recorded music on major platforms including Amazon, Facebook and Netflix. She also has sync-licensing placements with American Girl Doll, which plays her music in stores.

She currently performs in three bands: the Ruby Band, Bee Sides and the Pocket Burners.

Her biggest takeaway from being on American Idol as a teenager was that "it's not about how perfect you are — it's about how you make people feel," Hudson said.

"Now, my performing is all about making sure that everyone I'm in front of is having the best time possible," she said. "My goal is to find a way to travel the world and perform for people, so that just for the amount of time that I am with them, I want them to feel connected to the experience. I want them to feel seen. I want them to feel excited. I want them to be invested in the moment.

"People aren't going to remember if every note was perfect. They are going to remember how they felt from seeing you perform."

Although Hudson attended Berklee College of Music in Boston and now lives in San Francisco, the Tri-Valley remains a special place for her.

"Livermore actually has one of the best music communities around, if you ask me," she said. "Any time I come back to the Tri-Valley, it feels like home. That feeling I get when I know these people feel connected to me after all this time, it feels like a reunion, and it makes my heart feel so full and so happy.

"The dream for me is to go out and tour the world because I feel like music is missing something. There's a change that has happened in music where it all feels dead inside, and it feels manufactured. It doesn't feel real. I want to bring back that feeling that came from older music, when people used to go out to concerts all the time and it was more connective. I just want to heal the world, one hug and one song at a time."

Hudson's music is available on Apple Music and SoundCloud.

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