

Chinese Spy Targets Rep. Eric Swalwell

No Evidence to Support Congressman's Wrongdoing
By Larry Altman

REGIONAL — Revelations last week that a Chinese spy targeted Tri-Valley Congressman Eric Swalwell six years ago sparked a flurry of Republican calls for his removal from the House Intelligence committee, despite any indication that he did anything wrong.

Swalwell told reporters he was shocked years ago to learn from the FBI that the woman who raised funds for him and interacted with him at numerous events worked for China's Ministry of State Security — its intelligence operation. According to a report in Axios, the woman Swalwell knew as Christine Fang was cozying up to American politicians the Chinese deemed on the rise.

Swalwell — whose 15th (See SWALWELL, page 7)

Wente Debuts Autonomous E-Tractors

By Dawnmarie Fehr

LIVERMORE — Following a partnership with Wente Vineyards, Monarch Tractor recently relocated to Livermore.

Local harvesters will soon join farmers across the state in rolling out autonomous tractors.

Monarch Tractor designed the first fully electric, driver-optional, smart tractor. Released on Dec. 8, the new tractor will make an appearance at the vineyard in early 2021.

Originally based in Fremont, Monarch approached Wente Vineyards earlier this year about using some of the winery's land to experiment with the new technology. Their partnership eventually led Monarch to transfer all its operations — including manufacturing — to the Livermore area.

"They explained their whole vision, their company background; how they're all about sustainability and innovation and how they were looking for somewhere they could drive their tractors through vineyards — work on open ground, test all their stuff," said Brad Kurtz, viticulturalist for Wente. "They have a little 8-acre

(See TRACTOR, page 7)



Protesters in Livermore Dec. 15 demand a return to the classroom. Nobella Baba (with the bullhorn) organized the event. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Eden Downtown Plan Revision Increases Building Size by 42%

By Aly Brown

LIVERMORE — The 130-unit affordable housing plan for Eden Housing Inc. has changed since the one presented to the public over the last two and a half years.

The new design for the site located between L and K streets, Railroad Avenue and Veterans Way rolled out during last week's Dec. 7 workshop. It revealed an updated version with the same number of units, a building increased by approximately 42% and a smaller park. The park space between the buildings was reduced by about 32%.

The plan approved by the council in 2018 showed four separate buildings set for 130 units. The newer version offers two larger buildings. The building located to the north will house 79 units, reaching four stories. The building to the south will include 51 units with a maximum height of three stories.

In addition to workforce housing, the development will provide units for low-income and homeless individuals. According to a Jan. 21, 2020, Alameda County staff report, which identified a \$14.4 million Measure A1 loan for the Eden project, the develop-

ment met requirements by proposing to provide affordable housing to 78 low-income households, including 16 units targeting the homeless populations and 62 units at 50% of the area median income (AMI). The Measure A1 document does not address the income level for the remaining units.

In order to explain why the larger buildings were needed, Matt Graves, Eden Housing project developer, explained at the workshop that in the 2018 version, the four buildings each had a footprint of roughly 8,000 square feet.

(See EDEN, page 3)

BZA Approves Sunwalker Project

By Aly Brown

LIVERMORE — The East County Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA) last week voted to move forward with

At its Dec. 10 meeting, the BZA — absent board member Scott Beyer — approved the 59-acre Sunwalker project's conditional use

School Road.

Board member Frank Imhof said the project should have a 100-foot buffer zone on three of the project's sides

"We will not allow in a matter of mere weeks the destruction of land that has for centuries been used for farming and ranching and today is restricted under Measure D and other laws for agricultural uses only."

the smaller of two controversial solar utility-scale projects set for North Livermore.

Aramis, the larger 410-acre project also set for North Livermore, already gained approval from the BZA on Nov. 24.

permit (CUP) and certified the environmental impact report (EIR) with conditions. The project site sits at 4871 N. Livermore Ave., at the intersection of North Livermore Avenue and May

and landscape berms with agriculture along the perimeter. He added that a bond should be in place, obligating the applicant to restore the land to its original form if the project were never com-

(See SUNWALKER, page 9)



The Chabad of the Tri-Valley held a drive-thru Hanukkah celebration Thursday, Dec. 10, at Stoneridge Mall. The event featured Jeremiah Johnston of The Throw Zone. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Released Inmate Steals Sheriff's Office Golf Cart

By Larry Altman

DUBLIN — A drug suspect released from the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin on Monday found a unique way to head toward freedom — he allegedly stole a Sheriff's Office golf cart, authorities said.

Andre Lamont Lee, 55, didn't get far. Deputies arrested him near the Pleasanton/Dublin BART station. "We are giving him a ride back to Santa Rita jail in a police car," the department wrote on Twitter.

Lee, a registered sex offender, was arrested Sunday on a probation violation and drug offense, sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly said.

Lee spent the night in jail but was released on zero bail about 8 a.m. Monday because of restrictions to

limit the spread of COVID-19 among the inmate population.

Instead of walking away, Lee allegedly located the golf cart used by county maintenance workers and somehow started the engine, possibly by hot-wiring it, Kelly said.

"You'd have to go out of your way to go steal it," Kelly said. "He drove it down Arnold to Persimmon Place shopping center, and he ditched it in the bushes there."

A maintenance worker reported the theft. Deputies checked video surveillance and saw Lee driving away.

They caught up to him at 9:20 a.m., walking toward the BART station.

Deputies arrested Lee (See INMATE, page 7)

Energy Group to Consider Selling Nuclear Power

By David Chircop

REGIONAL — East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) is scheduled this week to consider a thorny policy proposal to accept free nuclear power from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and flip it to third-parties under a profit-sharing agreement.

Nick Chaset, the chief executive officer of Alameda County's local electricity utility provider, pitched the revenue-generating concept to the EBCE executive committee at a special meeting Dec. 4. While the panel did not endorse the proposal, a majority of the members said the idea should advance to the full board. The board was set to consider

(See NUCLEAR, page 8)



MERCY

PET OF THE WEEK

As Uncle Jesse says, "have mercy!" And now you can! Mercy is a four-month-old shorthair kitten looking to make your home a fuller house. Wake up and adopt a new family member today! While Valley Humane Society remains closed during shelter-in-place, adoptions are coordinated by appointment. For more information, contact info@valleyhumane.org.

(Photo - Valley Humane Society / E.Scholz)

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— VISIT WWW.INDEPENDENTNEWS.COM FOR DAILY ONLINE NEWS —



Candy Cane Lane, also known as Walnut Court in Pleasanton, welcomed visitors with a variety of decorations, Dec. 10. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)



The Nottingham Circle neighborhood in Livermore attracted visitors and sightseers with its festive holiday display on Dec. 12. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Axis Offers Help in Covered California Enrollment

The open enrollment period for the Covered California health plan closes Jan. 31, 2021, and Axis Community Health is offering to help anyone with questions.

“Health insurance can be confusing,” said Paula Barriga, Axis community relations manager. “If you have questions or concerns about enrolling, we can help.”

Axis enrollment counselor can help determine if someone is eligible for Medi-Cal, Covered Califor-

nia, or CalFresh during a free telephone consultation.

Covered CA offers plans from private insurance companies for U.S. citizens and documented immigrants. For individuals, an income of \$76,560 or less qualifies for coverage; for a family of four, an income of \$157,200 or less qualifies. Applicants cannot be denied coverage because of preexisting conditions and financial aid is available to cover the cost of plans and services.

“It’s important that consumers not miss the open enrollment window for Covered California or they may not have another opportunity to enroll,” Barriga said.

“Remember, you must now have coverage or potentially face a state tax penalty.”

Axis counselors can also assist people in enrolling in Medi-Cal or renewing their Medi-Cal coverage.

Individuals must have an income of \$17,237 or less

New Leadership Set for the Tri-Valley

The three cities of the Tri-Valley recently welcomed new mayors and councilmembers.

Livermore transitioned to its new elected officials Monday, Dec. 14, while the neighboring cities of Pleasanton and Dublin planned at press time to hold ceremonies Dec. 15.

Livermore’s new mayor, Bob Woerner, and incoming District 3 councilmember, Brittni Kiick, replaced the outgoing Mayor John Marchand and Councilmember Bob Coomber. Marchand termed out this year, but Coomber did not seek reelection.

Sen. Steve Glazer visited the virtual meeting to commend the outgoing leaders for jobs well done. He pointed out Marchand’s decades’ worth of public service in various capacities.

“You’ve done so many things to improve the quality

of life in Livermore; I could go on and on,” Glazer said. “I sincerely appreciate your service, your leadership; you live and breathe public service, and it shows in all you have done ...”

Glazer further recognized Coomber for his work on the council, along with his service to the East Bay Regional Park District.

Alameda County District 1 Supervisor Scott Hagerty also attended to read the proclamations for departing councilmembers. On the same evening, Marchand published a farewell letter to the community on the city website. To read his full letter, visit https://bit.ly/Indy_Farewell.

“I will miss the hugs and the handshakes that are typically associated with goodbyes and the opportunity to personally thank each one of the people with whom I have worked so closely over the last 15 years on the council while serving this community,” Marchand wrote. “I have deeply appreciated the great relationships that have been built with Lawrence

Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, Innovation Tri-Valley, LARPD, LVJUSD, Las Positas College, our amazing arts community, our non-profit partners, the entire city staff, the other elected officials and all of the great people with whom I was privileged to work.”

Following the election, one Livermore council seat remains unfilled. At press time, the proposed city council recruitment timeline was scheduled to open Wednesday, Dec. 16. It will close Jan. 1, with a special meeting for interviews to follow Jan. 18 and a swearing-in ceremony Jan. 25.

Pleasanton plans to welcome Karla Brown into the mayoral seat vacated by Jerry Thorne, along with councilmembers Jack Balch and Valerie Arkin on Tuesday this week.

On the same night, Dublin was scheduled to hold its swearing-in ceremony for Mayor-elect Melissa Hernandez and councilmembers Sherry Hu and Michael McCorriston.

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Chris Chandler to Leave Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association

Chris Chandler, who has led the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association as executive director since 2007, is retiring at the end of the year.

Chandler said she would be “taking on little projects” and spending more time at a second home she and her husband have in the small Sierra Nevada foothills community of Murphys. They also hope to take a delayed trip to wine country in Spain once the pandemic ends.

“We’re in that phase, that chapter of life,” Chandler said. “It’s unknown and unfamiliar, but it was time for a change.”

Her husband, Daryl Tom, is a hospital management consultant.

In 2019, Diablo Magazine named Chandler one of “three female power players bringing their A games to our local wine region.”

David Kent, with Darcie Kent Vineyards, said Chandler’s legacy would include her efforts to bring a wine country hotel to downtown Livermore, which was approved by the voters in a referendum last spring.

“It would have been a very different outcome without her leadership, attention and ability to mobilize a broad section of the community to stand up for what

is right and do what was needed to advance our wine country,” Kent said.

Tracy Farhad, who heads Visit Tri-Valley, the destination marketing association for the region, praised Chandler for her willingness “to partner and advocate on behalf of the hoteliers and wineries.”

“She has served seven years as an invaluable director on the Visit Tri-Valley board, and has long understood and contributed to the larger, regional and national marketing effort,” Farhad said. “We will miss her.”

Rachael Snedecor, executive director of Livermore Downtown, also said Chandler “always took a collaborative approach,” reaching out to involve downtown businesses in winegrower event to the benefit of both.

Under Chandler’s direction, the winegrower’s association received regional marketing grants totaling almost \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. She also led the organization through the economic recession of 2008-2009.

“It’s been an honor and privilege to represent Livermore Valley’s wineries and

vineyards for almost 14 years,” Chandler said. “I’m so proud of everything the members, team, board and I have accomplished together.”

Chandler has also served on the board of the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Foundation, the Las Positas College Viticulture & Enology program advisory board, East Bay Economic Development Alliance marketing and land-use committees, and the Visit Tri-Valley board of directors.

Brandi Addington, long-time operations and membership director for the winegrowers, will oversee the organization with support from the board of directors for the foreseeable future.

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Clarification:

In last week’s story on Pleasanton Paratransit Service, the current deadline for a rider to arrange transportation should have read 48 hours before the desired pickup time. The time window once Black Tie Limo takes over management for the service will be one to three days.

A photo of a parking garage located on L Street was incorrectly called the “L Street Garage,” which is a city-owned facility not scheduled for construction for at least another year.

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EDEN

(Continued from first page)



The above graphics display a comparison of downtown Eden Housing's design plan approved since 2018 (top) and that announced at a recent Dec. 7 Livermore City Council workshop meeting. (Photo - City of Livermore)

Winners of Nature Photography Contest Announced

The City of Dublin recently held its second annual "Nature in Our Backyard" photography contest as part of Dublin Pride activities. The city received 175 beautiful photographs of natural landscapes and wildlife taken in Dublin during the past 18 months. A panel of judges selected the top 10 photographs, which were then posted on the city's

website for a community vote. The top four vote-getters were chosen for awards. Photographer Dianne Mao was named both the Grand Prize and First Place winner for her "Red 'n' Green Hill" and "Sunrise at Dublin Ridge" photographs. Pradnya Kadam won second place with a photo entitled, "Beautiful Day," while third place went to Steve Kaat-

mann for his "Watchful Owl - Martin Canyon Creek Trail" photograph. Mike's Camera in Dublin will provide Mao with gift certificates totaling \$300. Kadam will receive a \$50 certificate, and Kaatmann will receive a \$25 gift certificate. In addition, all of the top winners will receive Certificates of Recognition from the Dublin City Coun-

cil at an upcoming meeting; will be featured on the City of Dublin website; receive a metal print of their picture from Mike's Camera; and the <https://bit.ly/2JPNZ0J> ir photos will be displayed in the lobby of the Civic Center. To view all of the winning photographs, visit <https://bit.ly/2JPNZ0J>

Shop With A Cop Brightens Holidays for Local Students

On Saturday, Dec. 5, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) and the Livermore Police Department (LPD) teamed up for the annual Shop With A Cop program. Thanks to the generosity of many in our community, each student received gifts for themselves and family members as a way to both celebrate and brighten the holiday season. Operating under a new, socially distanced format, 22 students from the Granada High School Leadership class did the shopping based on "wish lists" prepared by program recipients. Livermore Police Officers then delivered gifts to the homes of the 40 LVJUSD students, by far the most students ever served through this program.

Christensen Principal Pat Avilla, who has championed this program for many years states, "The Livermore Shop with a Cop program is in its twelfth year serving the students of the Livermore School district with gifts for the holidays. The school district is so fortunate to be able to partner with the Livermore Police Department to help our kids. Thank you to the Livermore community for always supporting this program." Livermore Police Officer Dan Cabral, who partnered with Avilla to launch this program in Livermore 12 years ago, said, "This year's Shop with a Cop program might have been slightly impeded due to COVID-19, however it was probably the most needed and special year of all! Our community, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, and the Livermore Police Department came together to bless 40 families, a record this year. Our police officers never hesitate to volunteer their unpaid time to give back to the community they love to serve." The program has received incredible support, including from the

Livermore Police Officers Association, where each participating officer paid \$75 to be part of No-Shave November, with 100% of the proceeds going to support this incredible program. Beginning in 2009 with four officers, eight student recipients, and \$2000 in personal donations, the Shop with a Cop program has grown to serve 40 families with \$20,000 in community donations. That's 12 years of making holidays brighter for Livermore families. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/LivermorePoliceDepartment.

At right, kids from Livermore's Shop with a Cop program seen with goodies, Dec. 5. (Photo - Philomena Rambo)



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"If you're trying to get 130 units, that gets you about 32 to 33 in each (building), and if you use 900 square feet on average for a unit to fit into that footprint, that gives you four floors," Graves explained. "And that would be just apartments; that wouldn't account for corridors, elevator shafts, stairs, laundry facilities, offices — all of the things that you would want in an apartment building wouldn't be able to fit into those footprints." Buildings will now have resident meeting spaces, on-site laundry, two administrative offices and units set aside for staff, he noted. To make everything fit in that older plan, Graves said the project would need to reduce the unit size below the tax credit standards. "It would actually be unfinanceable," he explained. "Plus, we really feel that larger family size units

would adequately represent what families would want." He said the previous parking garage plan was inefficiently laid out. Graves stated that the older design also doesn't show a bus turnout along Railroad Avenue, nor additional utility easements, which were added later. The project now provides a parking ratio of one unit to one stall. The city's standard requirement is one unit to 1.1 stalls. Eden Housing was asked to address the fact that only one entrance/exit has been provided. In regard to the project timeline, Linda Mandolini, Eden House president, stated that construction must begin by January 2022, unless Eden's requested extension is granted. The county A1 agreement authorizes the county's housing director to "extend this commitment by six months as needed for project viability."

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EDITORIAL Choose Unity Over Unfounded Accusations

Last week, an Axios report that took a year to complete revealed that China’s Ministry of State Security — its intelligence operation — sent a female spy to the United States to infiltrate the offices of politicians it deemed on the rise. One of those politicians included Tri-Valley Congressman Eric Swalwell.

Several Republicans seized on the story. Right-leaning websites reported it. Tucker Carlson, the top-rated host on Fox News Channel, held segments on Swalwell, accusing him of sleeping with Fang, even though the Axios article did not report he did, and no other evidence was presented.

U.S. Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, the Republican ranking member on the Intelligence committee, called Swalwell a risk to national security and demanded his removal from the committee. So did House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy and about 15 other Republicans, despite any evidence that Swalwell

did anything wrong.

Swalwell told CNN that he suspected the information was leaked to Axios a year earlier to hurt his reputation when he became one of President Donald Trump’s most ardent critics.

Swalwell courageously tackles issues. He should be honored not punished for being a leader.

Political attempts to damage reputations without facts should stop. For decades, partisan rancor has become worse and worse. Democratic and Republican investigations, egged on by political talk show hosts and pundits, have further eaten away at the ability for the two parties to work together.

The country desperately needs unity, not baseless attacks.

Following years of bitterness, let’s hope our two parties can work together to end the pandemic, restore the economy and help Americans who simply can’t pay their bills.

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. Abusive letters 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. Letters must be submitted by someone living in or from the Tri-Valley; they must not offer medical advice from unconfirmed professional sources or contain libelous or inappropriate content. 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. To be considered, letters must be received by 10 a.m. on the Tuesday before publication.

COVID Deaths Approaching WWII Alan Burnham, Livermore

As I write this letter, COVID deaths in the U.S. are approaching 300,000 souls. We also just commemorated the attack on Pearl Harbor, which ushered us into World War II. COVID deaths are averaging about 15,000 per week. Deaths lag diagnosis by approximately two weeks, so we can expect deaths to rise a little though the end of the year, and then hopefully decline during January, but an additional 100,000 deaths by the end of January is plausible. If not then, certainly by Valentine’s Day. Consequently, before a significant number of people can be vaccinated, COVID deaths will pass 400,000 souls in about a year. For perspective, 407,000 military personnel died in WWII over four years. The sacrifice of the population in WWII was huge, with war bonds and rationing coupons. By comparison, how big is the sacrifice of wearing a mask and social distancing? A minor sacrifice by

everyone can save a major sacrifice by some.

What do Committees Consider? John Kopp, Livermore

When these committees get together, do they consider the important things like water, sewage, traffic, etc.? We get pummeled daily on lack of these things, and how we can get along with less? What’s the plan? Keep building and cram more and more people in an area that’s reaching its limits? You folks are unbelievable! We could discuss all of the things that are wrong with this project, but I feel that voter approval is a must. You have to lay it all on the table. If you can’t, maybe you should move on to somewhere else.

Putting in a ‘Road Diet’ Along East Avenue Richard Hughes, Livermore

When the Paradise Fire happened recently, in California people were not able to evacuate out of there fast enough, because of, you guessed it, a road diet. www.quora.com/Are-California-road-diets-a-good-thing-or-bad-thing-Why-or-why-not The project implemented, in Paradise, to narrow the main road from four lanes to two lanes was called the Skyway Road Diet. The result was that while people were trying to escape the California wildfire, they had fewer lanes to get out of town. This ‘Road Diet’ was paid for by increases in California’s gasoline tax! Travel lanes were reduced, and bike lanes added to Pearson Road, a major cross street that became jammed during the fire evacuation. According to the Sacramento Bee, the bottleneck created by the Skyline Road Diet caused some residents to have to abandon their vehicles to the flames and flee on foot, holding on to their pantaloons strings! City of Livermore officials in cahoots with a private company called TJKM (Pleasanton) are seriously thinking of implementing a ‘Road Diet’ along the entire length of East Avenue! Check out their website at www.eastavecorridorstudy.com. East Avenue is one of only three major east-west arteries in the City of Livermore! It is considered one of the main evacuation routes to get away quickly from the Central Livermore Area,

in the event of a California wildfire or a major earthquake! It would not be very ‘prudent’ to remove one traffic lane, in each direction, which is what the ‘road diet’ entails, for the simple reason that it would ‘clog up’ or cause a bottleneck along a major evacuation route, in the event of a California wildfire or a major earthquake.

Suggestion to City of Livermore officials - please do not put in that Road Diet! Citizens of Livermore - please check out the 772-comment discussion that has been raging on nextdoor.com for over a month now! Many people are questioning the wisdom of this ‘road diet.’

Congratulations to The Winners Hayden Sidun, Livermore

I want to be among the first to congratulate Mayor Woerner on his ascension to the highest elected office in Livermore. Working on his campaign for five months out of this year, I grew close to him and got to know him more as a person. Mayor Woerner is a kind and wonderful human being who truly cares about Livermore and the interests of its residents, and even if you didn’t vote for him last month, we can all rest assured that our city remains in good hands. That said, I also want to thank John Marchand, our now-former mayor, for his dedicated service to this city over these past nine years. His leadership has brought about much-needed change to Livermore, and it is because of what he was able to accomplish that our city is in such a good state today. Like his successor, Mayor Marchand is a wonderful man and the embodiment of “leadership by example”. We should all be grateful for his service to Livermore. I want to congratulate Councilmember Kiick on her ascension to the city council. As our city’s first queer and millennial councilmember (at least, she is to the extent of my knowledge), I feel comfortable living in a city where someone like her can make it to the top, and as one of Livermore’s thousands of youth residents, I feel that my interests are represented on the city council more than they were in previous years. I want to congratulate Kristie Wang and Yanira Guzmán on becoming trustees on the LVJUSD Board of Education. As a student in Livermore, it is comforting to me that the two newest additions to the school board are parents of currently enrolled students. Both have impressive track records, too: Wang is a community activist who spearheaded Livermore’s anti-vaping initiative with then-Councilmember Woerner, and Guzmán is a teacher herself. Though a solid majority of

students they represent were not old enough to vote for them last month—students such as myself—I have nothing but confidence that they will serve us well over the next four years. In January, the city council will take on the responsibility of appointing a new city councilmember. I urge Mayor Woerner and Councilmembers Kiick, Munro, and Carling to make an apolitical appointment based on nothing except their qualifications for the position. Lastly, to those at The Independent: do not edit this letter.

Downtown Housing Jean King, Livermore

After seeing the development on the Groth property, many people were very enthusiastic about the idea of moving the affordable housing off the downtown block. This was a ‘win-win’ - more housing north of Railroad Avenue and more open space or park in our downtown. But what was shown at Monday’s council workshop was less open space in our downtown with two large, expanded buildings that used up more of the open space. We need Veteran’s Park to be a real park for the residents, not a pathway between three- and four-story buildings. The council should continue to work on a better plan.

We Must Speak Up Merlin Newton Sr., Livermore

In October, a spokesperson for Intersect Power, the company behind the proposed massive Aramis solar project, stated that Measure D “was intended to protect community open space like parklands.” This is false. Parks have always been protected from development. Measure D serves an entirely different purpose and applies to the ranch and farmland in North Livermore Valley that Intersect Power seeks to convert into an industrial solar power plant and lithium-ion battery station. Adopted by the voters in 2000, Measure D established an urban growth boundary to prevent sprawl from encroaching on the rural areas of east Alameda County. Measure D’s purpose is twofold: (1) ensure our dwindling agricultural lands, open space, watersheds, and wildlife habitat are preserved and (2) encourage infill and transit-friendly development to help revitalize neighborhoods within existing urban boundaries. The Aramis solar plant and the proposed neighboring SunWalker solar plant would extend for over a mile along North Livermore Avenue. Together, they would strike a dagger in the heart of Measure D. The plants would dramatically and permanently alter an enormous

section of North Livermore Valley from open ranch and farmland into an industrial use — the commercial generation of electricity, most of which will be sent outside of Alameda County. 75% of the power from the Aramis plant is under contract to San Francisco electricity customers. Local environmentalist Dick Schneider, a co-author of Measure D, has stated that if Alameda County permits two proposed solar power plants in North Livermore Valley, more energy companies will move into the valley. “Pretty soon, that area is not going to have agriculture at all,” Schneider told this paper earlier this year. “It’s just going to have large scale power plants, and the character (of the valley) is going to change.” Measure D is why Livermore still has open space, vineyards, farms, ranches, and wildlife habitats just a few minutes drive from downtown. We can’t let private corporations destroy the work of countless Livermore residents and organizations spanning decades to preserve Livermore Valley. Please take a moment to contact the Alameda County Supervisors and that uphold Measure D and reject these solar power plant. Visit save-northlivermorevalley.com/ action for an easy-to-use link to email the supervisors.

The scenic beauty, natural habitat and open space of the North Livermore Valley belong to all of us. We must speak up now or it will be lost.

Don’t Give Up Rifka Sevalal, Livermore

Let’s not give up on a large, welcoming downtown park – a place to meet friends, have outdoor entertainment and events, and of course, draw people to shop and dine downtown. Such a park is a key component for the new hotel to provide outdoor space to relax and stroll. We talk about the character of our downtown, but it has significantly changed with the First Street construction making a corridor looming over the existing buildings on the other side of the street. Post-pandemic, people will be drawn to being together, and a park would be an oasis for this and a lasting asset for our community.

Thanksgiving Parties Put Us At Risk Mick Hanou, Pleasanton

I appreciate The Independent articles keeping us advised of the pandemic’s progress in our communities. Unfortunately, we are now in a severe lockdown due to the rising caseload as a result of the parties or gatherings many had over Thanksgiving. The Valley communities had this somewhat controlled with responsible

people wearing masks and distancing. Residents were able to enjoy the accommodations (like outdoor dining) made by our towns to support restaurants and other small businesses. I’m over 65 and, except for grocery shopping and an occasional take-out meal (fully protected), have been isolating since March because COVID could kill us.

We are suffering from pandemic fatigue and can’t enjoy what we did in the past, so the parties make me especially angry. Now, because of the irresponsibility of those who decided to “party” over Thanksgiving, our health system and workers are severely stressed, businesses are suffering, and people are getting sick and dying. I say to those who caused this - you stupid, socially irresponsible, reprehensible, ignorant-of-science, uncaring of those at risk, selfish, stupid people. The virus does need to be taken seriously, and you’re only helping it spread, causing suffering and killing people. I thank health care workers, grocery employees, postmen, delivery services, and others who are trying hard to keep our society functional for their efforts and concern.

Don’t Give Up On Park Cal Wood, Livermore

Last week at the city council’s workshop, I noted that objections were raised about examining the idea of expanding the park by moving the housing north of Railroad Avenue and greatly increasing the number of units to be built. Two objections were raised about a change. 1) Housing adjacent to railroad tracks isn’t feasible and 2) the land north of Railroad Avenue would require years to acquire. The fallacy of the first argument is seen by Heritage Estates on Stanley Boulevard and the Chestnut Street housing development. The second objection appears to be incorrect also, since the city owns some of the land, and last week, Ruth Gasten said that most of the land north is for sale now. The rush here is based on the idea that we need low-cost housing now (which we do) and that studying this option would delay things for up to five years. If the city were really intent on exploring this change, it appears to me that it would delay the project by about a year at most, although it would take effort, time and a real commitment. I strongly feel that we should commit to exploring a larger park in the center of town with more land for housing north of Railroad Avenue. The quality-of-life benefit for the citizens of Livermore would last a lifetime.

THE Independent

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Pleasanton Police Add New Officer, Dispatcher



The Pleasanton Police Department has added a new officer and a dispatcher. Officer Imani Hiller-Bateau is a former cadet for the Oakland Police Department. She graduated from Berkeley High School and took criminal justice classes at Merritt College. Dispatcher Audra Curtis previously worked in the emergency room for Stanford Health Care-ValleyCare.

Seen from left, Dispatcher Audra Curtis and Officer Imani Hiller-Bateau recently joined the Pleasanton Police Department. (Photo - PPD)

Children’s Chorus Offers Holiday Concert

The Cantabella Children’s Chorus will present a free online holiday concert on Saturday, Dec. 19. The link to the 40-minute concert will be available throughout the evening, beginning at 4 p.m., at www.cantabella.org. The Pleasanton-based nonprofit has been conducting virtual classes via Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic. Children in the chorus recorded themselves at home for the holiday concert, with their voices then combined digitally for the multi-part harmony. Cantabella is also accepting registrations for spring 2021 classes, which will continue to be taught via Zoom.

Community Services Combat Mental Health Crises During Pandemic

By Jesse Watson

As the COVID-19 pandemic increases stressors and national mitigation efforts force individuals into isolation, professionals report increasing cases of mental health crises. According to a recent study by Mental Health America, the number of adults in the United States experiencing a mental health illness increased from 45 million to 47 million in the past year. “Humans are wired for connection,” said Mary Vice, a Livermore-based marriage and family therapist. “The isolation and any feelings coming from that are completely normal and would be strange not to have.” The main mental health issues Vice has seen as a result of the pandemic are increases in substance abuse and suicidality. Other prevalent issues include anxiety, depression, relationship stress, insomnia, unemployment stress and a surfacing

of general trauma. Vice encourages her patients to find ways to maintain social connection virtually, such as through phone calls with family members or connecting with churches or other groups. If professional support is an option, Vice highly recommends utilizing that resource. “There’s nothing wrong with seeking help or support for this very unnatural shelter-in-place because we’re built to connect with other humans,” she said. **Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services** One mental health resource available to the community is Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS). According to its website, the BCHS’s mission is to “maximize the recovery, resilience and wellness of all eligible Alameda County residents who are developing or experiencing serious mental health, alcohol or

drug concerns.” The BCHS website offers several resources for Alameda County residents, including crisis support and helplines for mental health and substance-use treatment. For more information, visit www.acbhcs.org. **National Alliance on Mental Illness** The Tri-Valley affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Tri-Valley) provides advocacy, support and resources for families and individuals impacted by mental illnesses. Specifically, the nonprofit organizes support groups and workshops for family caregivers and individuals living with mental illnesses. Volunteers at NAMI Tri-Valley also connect members of the community who are looking for further help with other mental health resources. When shelter-in-place went into effect, NAMI Tri-Valley adapted by moving its resources and peer groups

to online formats. The group now meets via Zoom for all workshops and peer groups, according to NAMI Tri-Valley Second Vice President Marsha McInnis. “These are human problems, and human connections that aren’t happening,” McInnis said. “We can’t do it in person, so we’re on Zoom.” To get connected, email marsha@nami-trivalley.org, call 925-980-5331 or visit www.nami-trivalley.org. **Senior Programs** Heightened isolation has been particularly difficult for senior members of the community who may be more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus, according to Vice. “(Seniors) are facing mortality, isolation and loneliness,” Vice said. “They’re almost feeling like pariahs just because they’re elderly.” The Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley (SSPTV) provides a line Tri-Valley residents over

the age of 60 can call for senior-specific resources at 925-931-5379. Alameda County senior citizens can also access a

list of resources available to seniors organized by Alameda County Area Agency on Aging at https://bit.ly/Indy_SeniorResources.

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IT’S SCOTT’S FINAL CHRISTMAS FOOD AND TOY DRIVE!



Destiny Lopez and Roya Soltani process samples during a no-cost, drive-in COVID-19 testing effort at Livermore's Elk's Lodge. It was hosted by Bay Area Community Health, the City of Livermore and the Livermore Area Recreation Park District, on Monday, Dec. 14. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

New Pandemic Restrictions Have Eateries Scrambling to Adapt

By Tony Hicks
Bay City News Foundation

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise, Alameda County is under regional orders to cease in-person dining, including outside patios, and Tri-Valley restaurants are scrambling to adapt.

Many restaurants say they were just recovering from being shut down from March until June, when most counties re-opened with restrictions.

The latest shutdown,

Now, they're still going to gather. But they'll just do it at someone's house."

Delivery services such as DoorDash also help keep people employed, Utikal acknowledged. But the percentage the services take cuts into his ability to pay his own employees.

"They're taking, pretty much, our margin," Utikal said. "The gratuities also go to DoorDash, so my servers and people who prepared the meal don't get anything. We need to make it clear to

Restaurants weren't the only ones feeling positive only to have the door slammed shut with the newest lockdown.

Fusion3 Salon -- which has locations in Livermore, Pleasanton and Brentwood -- closed except for take-home products between March and August. Owner Larry Phillips said business was back to more than 80% of normal by the end of November.

"With this shutdown, we have committed to continuing to pay our team's benefit

"Our message is to continue to ask our community to support our restaurant and retail businesses by ordering take-out food, merchandise and gift cards whenever possible."

"while not entirely unexpected, is depressing and painful for members of the business community," said Dawn Argula, president of the Livermore Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"Nonetheless, we understand and support the rationale for doing so," Argula said. "By now, businesses are keenly aware that their return to economic prosperity is intricately tied to our ability to control the COVID-19 virus."

Sidetrack Bar + Grill in Pleasanton has two patios with about 1,000 square feet, and owner Todd Utikal said he was starting to turn a profit again, as long as the weather was good.

"We were doing great," said Utikal, who's been in business for two years. "We were coming back."

Utikal said business was down about 40% this November, compared to November 2019, but the restaurant was still getting by before the most recent shutdown.

"It's just been a roller coaster, up and down," said Utikal. "I think my restaurant will survive, but my employees ... I have to look them in the eye and tell them I just can't give them the hours they need. These people are trying to pay their rent."

Utikal referenced the recent battle in Southern California between government officials and restaurant owners over what constitutes an essential service and whether restaurants spread the virus.

The California Restaurant Association has sued the state over the ban, claiming it is being arbitrary and unfair.

A Los Angeles restaurant owner's video went viral last weekend showing a film crew's catering area set up near her establishment's closed outdoor dining area.

"Tell me that this is dangerous," said Angela Marsden, the owner of Pineapple Hill Saloon & Grill, showing her space, then panning to the film crew's set-up. "But right next to me - as a slap in my face - that's safe. This is safe?"

"It's frustrating when they say it's our industry that's causing the problem," Utikal said. "We were in a place where people were happy to get back out again.

people that picking up food is the way to go."

Matthew Greco, the owner of Salt Craft in Pleasanton, said the latest shutdown halted his restaurant's "social bubble dinners," with specialized menus for groups.

"All of our parties cancelled -- 12 of them -- between now and the end of the year and into January. They're all cancelled, which kind of sucks," Greco said. "It was the one revenue stream that continued to grow."

Greco has tried to compensate with take-out.

"The demand has changed rapidly over the past nine months and while we're adapting, it's not easy," Greco said.

Salt Craft's business was already missing the lunch crowd from nearby companies like Workday. "We hosted a lot of 12-person lunches for random companies," Greco said, adding that the full-service restaurant model was already becoming unsustainable, even before the pandemic.

"Everyone is in the red right now," he said. "I guess the goal is to retain the least amount of red. The question is can we get something done in time to save our businesses?"

packages through Jan. 4," Phillips said. "After that, we're not sure what will happen and what we'll be capable of doing. Everyone is furloughed on a fraction of their hours again."

Fusion3 was able to secure government loans to help cover payroll and other expenses, though Phillips said when considering other factors like lost gratuities, employees likely would've been better off taking unemployment benefits.

"We've offered help to our team in the form of food, money -- even just a chat. But we really worry that some of them won't have the basics to be comfortable and provide for their own families," Phillips said. "The emotional stress can be tough for a lot of people."

Steve Van Dorn, president of the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce, said local businesses need all the help they can get.

"Our message is to continue to ask our community to support our restaurant and retail businesses by ordering take-out food, merchandise and gift cards whenever possible," Van Dorn said. "Also, check with your favorite restaurant to see if they provide delivery services. This saves the restaurant and the purchaser money."

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Monarch Tractor founders stand beside the latest farming tech: an autonomous e-tractor. One will soon debut at Wente Vineyards. (Photo - Monarch Tractor)

SWALWELL

(Continued from first page)



Rep. Eric Swalwell

district includes Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Sunol and 11 other cities — cut ties to her and provided information about her to the FBI to assist with their investigation, he said.

“Long ago, Rep. Swalwell provided information about this person, whom he hasn’t seen in nearly six years, to the FBI, and he didn’t participate in the Axios story to protect information that might be classified,” Swalwell’s spokesman Josh Richman said.

“The FBI has now reaffirmed that Rep. Swalwell was never suspected of wrongdoing in this matter. In addition, the Republican and Democratic congressional leadership were informed that Rep. Swalwell was not suspected of wrongdoing. No concerns were raised on either side of the aisle at that time or over the past five years.”

Despite that, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a Republican who represents Bakersfield, suggested Swalwell should not continue to serve on the Intelligence Committee. Swalwell became fodder for discussion on right-leaning talk shows.

“He is jeopardizing national security,” McCarthy told reporters.

Swalwell said he would remain on the committee. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she knew about the Chinese spy plot and had no problem with Swalwell.

Axios reported Dec. 8 that China’s intelligence operation placed Fang — known as Fang Fang — in the United States to target “up-and-coming local politicians in the Bay Area and

across the country who had the potential to make it big on the national stage.” Citing current and former U.S. Intelligence officials and one former elected official, Axios said Fang got close to political power through fundraising, extensive networking, personal charisma and romantic or sexual relationships with two Midwestern mayors from 2011-2015.

U.S. officials told Axios they did not believe Fang received or passed on classified information. However, they stated that the discovery of her activities was a “big deal” because of whom she targeted; it’s indicative of how hard China is working to infiltrate the United States. Axios reported that private but unclassified information about government officials — including their habits, schedules and social networks — is a part of what foreign intelligence operatives collect and reveals how China tried to gain access to and influence U.S. political circles.

Swalwell, a former Dublin mayor elected in 2012, was among the more significant targets because he was considered a rising star in the Democratic party, the report said. Swalwell beat incumbent Congressman Pete Stark for the post and serves on the Intelligence committee. He ran for president in 2019, but was the first candidate to drop out.

Fang first took part in fundraising activity for Swalwell’s 2014 reelection campaign, and interacted with him at multiple events, Axios reported, citing its sources.

Axios, said there was no evidence Fang’s activities resulted in Swalwell receiving illegal contributions.

Aal counterintelligence officials began watching Fang in 2015 and notified Swalwell, who quickly cut ties with her. Fang left the country, Axios said.

Axios said Fang also targeted Ro Khanna, volunteering for his unsuccessful 2014 bid for Congress to represent Fremont and surrounding communities. He won in 2016. She also raised funds for Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) in 2013. Axios posted photographs

showing Fang with Swalwell, Khanna, U.S. Rep. Judy Chu (D-Pasadena) and former U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, who was defeated by Khanna.

Axios said its reporting took a year. Swalwell suggested in interviews with Politico and CNN that the timing the information was leaked to the media coincided with the impeachment investigation and Swalwell’s outspokenness against President Donald Trump. He told reporters it was intended to hurt him.

“They are not going to silence me,” Swalwell said. “But what they are going to do is they are going to make others think twice when they are asked to sit down and provide ... information about people like this.”

Despite no indication of anything illegal on Swalwell’s part, right-leaning publications and television shows focused on Swalwell and the Chinese spy. Tucker Carlson accused Swalwell of a sexual relationship with Fang. Axios reported that Fang slept with two mayors, but indicated nothing about Swalwell.

Some Republican politicians demanded answers from Swalwell and Democratic leaders.

“Why is Speaker Pelosi trying to sweep this under the rug?” U.S. Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio) wrote on Twitter on Dec. 10. “Rep. Swalwell needs to stop dodging questions and explain to the Intelligence Committee exactly what happened regarding the alleged Chinese spy.”

Florida Sen. Rick Scott said on Fox Business that Swalwell cannot remain on the Intelligence committee.

Georgia Congressman Doug Collins, the House Intelligence committees ranking member, stated “Eric Swalwell is a risk to our national security. He should be removed from the House Intelligence Committee immediately.”

Swalwell told CNN the FBI thanked him for his help.

“There was never a suspicion of wrongdoing on my part, and all I did was cooperate and the FBI said that,” Swalwell said.

TRACTOR

(Continued from first page)

parcel in the back where we created a test site for them, and we have been working collaboratively with them ... we both have similar values and vision, and Wente is always trying to be on the forefront of innovation and technology, and it’s worked out well.”

Established in 2018, the Monarch Tractor founders wanted to utilize 21st-century technology to empower farmers to implement sustainable and organic practices.

“The Monarch Tractor and our technology are ready for farmers around the world to start using our tractor and help you make more money and take control of your farm,” said Praveen Penmetta, co-founder and CEO of Monarch. “All of this at a global scale means that you can really trust the Monarch Tractor to do your mission critical applications today.”

Mark Schwager, Monarch co-founder and president, stated that the company won’t ask farmers to choose between profitability and sustainability.

“The two have to come together,” he continued.

Schwager noted the tractor’s ability to collect data — combined with its electric engine and autonomous capabilities — will fundamentally change farmers’ economics and allow them to become more profitable. The high-tech tractors can perform preprogrammed tasks without a driver. As an

alternative, an operator can use Monarch’s interactive automation features to make the machine follow a worker on the job.

The Monarch Tractor’s price starts at \$50,000. Schwager said a comparable John Deere will retail for approximately \$35,000, but cost thousands more in the long run.

“Because of the operating cost differential, our product will save a famer \$280 a day in operating costs, so we make up that differential in less than six months,” he said.

Kurtz stated that Wente shares Monarch’s commitment to sustainable practices.

“Sustainable practices are often limited because they are difficult to do and are very time consuming,” Kurtz said. “When you don’t have an operator, time no longer becomes a real factor, and you can run a tractor, potentially, 24/7 ... it changes the whole equation and allows you to embrace some of these practices that are more financially possible.”

He noted removing the human from the equation makes it a much safer tractor as well.

The farming world will

have its eyes riveted on the Bay Area as these new tractors begin to make their way into vineyards, orchards and fields next year. Chris Chandler of the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association said she was excited to see Monarch establish its headquarters and take root in the Livermore Valley.

“Monarch Tractor is helping wine grape growers get on a clear path to sustainable farming,” said Chandler. “Their mission aligns with our own to advance, protect and promote the quality wines, vineyards and experiences of Livermore Valley Wine Country.”

For more information on Monarch Tractor, visit <https://www.monarchtractor.com/>.

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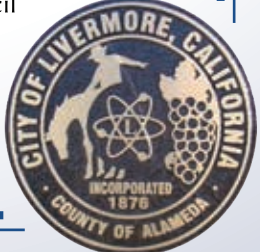
Apply today to be the next City of Livermore Council Member!



The City Council primarily acts as policy makers and governs the activities of the City of Livermore. The Council strives to understand and reflect the entire community's values and needs, and allocate resources accordingly. To achieve this, the Council serves as an oversight body and provides clear direction to staff and follows up with the community. The Council recognizes their responsibility to make sound financial decisions that enhance the quality of life for Livermore residents. To ensure a community-wide focus, the Council hears and engages with all community members.

The vacancy being filled is a two year at-large seat that will be converted to a district seat in 2022, to represent District 1.

- » **12/16/20:** Recruitment period opens
- » **1/1/21 by 5pm:** Application deadline
- » **1/19/21:** Evening interviews conducted by Council at a special meeting
(Interviews may be via Zoom due to COVID-19.)
- » **For more information on how to apply, see the City website at:**
www.CityofLivermore.net/applycc



EDITOR

(Continued from first page)

Envisioning a world in which every animal is loved and every person knows the love of an animal, VHS creates a brighter future for cats and dogs by encouraging and strengthening the bond between people and pets. VHS rescues and rehabilitates companion animals, champions responsible caretaking, shares pets’ soothing affections with people in need of comfort, and supports and preserves existing pet-guardian relationships.

To learn more about VHS, visit <https://valley-humane.org>.

was booked at 11 a.m. and that his case this time is “bailable.” He is scheduled to appear in court Feb. 11.

INMATE

(Continued from first page)

on suspicion of grand theft, receiving stolen property and vehicle theft. Santa Rita Jail records showed he

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Livermore Sanitation

We wish you the happiest of holidays and a prosperous 2021!

Holiday Service Schedule

CHRISTMAS WEEK & NEW YEAR'S DAY WEEK: If your regular collection day is Friday, your containers will be serviced one day later.

DECEMBER 21 - 26, 2020					
If your collection day is:	Mon. 21	Tue. 22	Wed. 23	Thu. 24	Fri. 25
Your holiday collection day will be:	Mon. 21	Tue. 22	Wed. 23	Thu. 24	Sat. 26

DEC. 28, 2020 - JAN. 2, 2021					
If your collection day is:	Mon. 28	Tue. 29	Wed. 30	Thu. 31	Fri. 1
Your holiday collection day will be:	Mon. 28	Tue. 29	Wed. 30	Thu. 31	Sat. 2

Holiday Tree Collection

Livermore Sanitation will collect trees from January 4-15, 2021.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- Put your tree at the curb by 6am on your regular service day during the dates listed above.
- Make sure the stand, lights and decorations have been removed.
- Cut tall trees into pieces no longer than five feet.
- **NOTE:** Flocked trees cannot be composted. Please contact us for disposal options.



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NUCLEAR

(Continued from first page)

the policy Wednesday, Dec. 16, after The Independent's deadline.

The source of the power is PG&E's Diablo Canyon, the state's last remaining nuclear-power plant. It is scheduled for decommissioning in 2024 and 2025 when the operating licenses on the station's two reactors expire.

a Sept. 24 letter from 11 community choice aggregators to the California Public Utilities Commission.

While the previous proposals to accept nuclear power would have resulted in EBCE reporting the source in its power mix, the latest proposal would avoid that requirement.

Cynthia Landry, a union

“Given the level of controversy and the uncertainty around it, it’s not worth doing. I worry about what that does to our branding long term and our ability to hold the moral high ground when we’re sitting in a room with assemblymembers and saying, ‘Help us out because we’re the good guys.’”

PG&E plans to make up for the lost generation with renewable energy procurement and energy efficiency programs. Currently, the nuclear energy generated at Diablo Canyon is sent to California's grid. The new plan would not change where the power ultimately flows. It is a paper financial transaction that determines who holds title to the power and the assignment of associated rights and obligations.

“The dollar amount means a lot to me in terms of what I would decide,” EBCE Board Chairman Dan Kalb told the committee.

Kalb, an Oakland City Councilmember, signaled he might vote for the proposal if the staff could zero in on more precise revenue estimates and dedicate the profits to local clean energy projects.

If approved, EBCE's annual share of the nuclear power revenue is projected to range from between \$500,000 to more than \$1 million based on staff estimates, but actual proceeds from the sale could be considerably higher or lower based on actual sales. The initial range presented to the executive committee was between \$175,000 on the low end and more than \$2 million on the high end.

“A few hundred thousand dollars doesn't seem worth the trouble, you know. A million and a half or more seems worth it,” Kalb said. “We don't know where it's going to land, but that's how I'm thinking.”

The local Clean Power Alliance, which fought two previous proposals this year to add nuclear energy to EBCE's power mix, opposes the concept of monetizing nuclear power. Opponents question whether there is a market to resell the energy and say nuclear power is not clean energy; they state the agency should focus its attention elsewhere.

They also raise the prospect of taking on a liability, noting the 2011 earthquake and tsunami that triggered the 2011 meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan. Diablo Canyon is perched on a bluff above the Pacific Ocean. PG&E says the plant is safe and would withstand any earthquakes, tsunamis and flooding that could occur at the site. EBCE staff say the proposed transaction does not carry risk.

“East Bay Clean Power Alliance opposes nuclear,” said Barbara Stebbins, a volunteer with the organization. “If it opposes nuclear, we oppose the idea of taking it and selling it to someone else.”

For proponents, the nuclear option is viewed as a way to offset the Power Charge Indifference Adjustment, known as the utility “exit fee” that PG&E charges community choice aggregators like EBCE.

Community aggregators say the fee has undercut their ability to provide clean energy to consumers at competitive rates. It has risen more than 600% since 2013 and nearly doubled since 2018, according to

representative who serves on the EBCE's community advisory panel, acknowledging the potential financial benefit, but likened it to money laundering.

“There's something there that just doesn't feel right,” she said.

Every year, entities like EBCE receive carbon-free allocations from PG&E and have the option to accept energy produced at large hydroelectric plants, or from the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, or both. At the board's direction earlier this year, EBCE accepted carbon-free allocations from hydropower sources only.

Under the proposal, EBCE would elect to begin accepting nuclear energy from PG&E early next year. Prior to receiving nuclear allocations, EBCE would transfer title to the power to an energy marketer that would then attempt to resell it to a third party. EBCE would receive half of the net revenue from any sale.

In addition to the financial benefit, Chaset said, in one sense, a greater benefit potential is placing community choice aggregators in a better competitive position relative to PG&E. The reasons are complex, but the more nuclear power community choice utilities take from PG&E, the more carbon-emitting power generation PG&E will have to report to consumers.

PG&E produces more energy than it sells to retail customers. Because state energy regulations allow utilities to report only the amount of generation equal to retail sales, PG&E uses creative accounting methods to avoid disclosing its actual power mix, which includes electricity sourced from natural gas-fired power plants, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

“Given the level of controversy and the uncertainty around it, it's not worth doing,” said Hayward City Councilman Al Mendall, the EBCE executive committee chair. “I worry about what that does to our branding long term and our ability to hold the moral high ground when we're sitting in a room with assemblymembers and saying, ‘Help us out because we're the good guys.’”

Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin, the committee vice chair, said the board has had “spirited discussions” on whether the agency should accept any nuclear power in the allocations.

“I just am nervous about the agency playing a role in promoting nuclear energy, even if it's not for our customers,” he said.

Emeryville City Councilwoman Dianne Martinez, a member of the executive committee, said she was persuaded that the benefits of the proposal are worth considering.

“This nuclear is going to be on the grid no matter what and I feel like it's a giveaway to PG&E, and even if we're not making a huge impact by selling this off, if we are able to set off a chain of other CCAs making similar actions, that will force PG&E to report all that dirty energy.”



Ralph Mele of Pleasanton and Denise Gajewski of Fremont pick up some favorite wines at Darcie Kent Vineyards' Barn Sale in the company's renovated, purple barn, on Saturday, Dec. 12. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Virtual Turkey Burn Run Raises \$7,000 for Youth Programs

Despite the obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pleasanton North Rotary managed to raise more than \$7,000 for youth programs during its sixth annual Tri-Valley Turkey Burn Family Fun Run over the Thanksgiving holiday.

This year's Turkey Burn drew 225 registered participants who planned their own runs, walks, or strolls with

family members or small groups of friends in the Tri-Valley area, according to Michael Cherman, who chaired the Rotary organizing committee.

The 2019 Tri-Valley Turkey Burn at Ken Mercer Sports Park in Pleasanton drew nearly 2,000 registered participants.

“It was hard to predict what it would be like to go virtual, but we still had a lot

of positive feedback from our runners and walkers,” Cherman said. “The spirit of the Turkey Burn lived on.”

As in past years, participants were again invited to share messages of thanks in words and pictures on their Turkey Burn runners' bibs. The Rotary also accepted donations of canned and packaged food items for the Tri-Valley Haven Food Pantry.

The Turkey Burn helps support local youth services such as the Rotary International Youth Exchange, Student of the Month awards, the Richard D. King Youth Speech Contest, and scholarships to the Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp in Scott's Valley, California. Funds this year will also go to Seek and Save, a Pleasanton-based charity for under-served youth.

Twin Valley District Scouts Support Alameda Food Bank

Scouts from the Twin Valley District, which covers Pleasanton, Livermore, Dublin and Sunol, helped collect 5,570 pounds of food and

raised \$4,737 in donations during the annual Scouting for Food drive, surpassing the district's goal of \$3,500.

Without being able to

go door-to-door as in past food drives because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scouts relied on a combination of emails, texts, and

social media to reach out to friends and neighbors.

The food and donations went to the Alameda County Community Food Bank.

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Now until Saturday, March 6 Give the Gift of Swim

American Swim Academy is offering its 2021 Winter Camps for age 6 months to 15 years. Camps run weekly for 30 minutes with class ratios as low as 2:1. Gift certificates are now available. The academy is also hiring for positions in Dublin, Livermore and Walnut Creek. For more information, visit americanswimacademy.com.

Thursday, Dec. 17, Friday, Dec. 18 Supervisor Scott Haggerty's Toy and Canned Food

Holiday Open House with Supervisor Scott Haggerty. Please deliver an unwrapped new toy and/or canned food item for donation to a local charity to The Historic Heritage House Alameda County Fairgrounds 4501 Pleasanton Ave. Pleasanton between 9am and 6pm. For more information, please contact Melissa Hernandez at 925-803-7253 or melissa.hernandez@acgov.org.

Thursday, Dec. 17 Holiday Resources Drive-Thru for Seniors

Join Dublin Senior Center for a fun, socially distanced event. Pick up a useful list of resources and information about local senior services, plus a swag bag filled with goodies to help you through the holidays. Free to those 50 and better, first come, first served. Please enter from Donohue Drive and drive toward the Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd, Dublin, 12:30pm to 1:15pm. Stay in your car, roll down the window of an unoccupied passenger seat, or pop open the trunk. Senior Center staff will bring the swag bag to you. For more information call 925-556-4511.

Thursday, Dec. 17, Thursday, Dec. 31 Holiday Concerts

Everyone's favorite “little orchestra” Pink Martini brings some much-needed holiday cheer right into your living room this December with a pair of brand-new streaming

concert events. Celebrate the holiday season and ring in the New Year with the whole family. “Home for the Holidays” is scheduled for Dec. 17, and “Good Riddance 2020” is scheduled for Dec. 31. Buy one or both concerts at <https://bit.ly/3gk8yhP>.

Friday, Dec. 18 & Wednesday, Dec. 23 The Nutcracker

December at the Bankhead usually brings the delightful Valley Dance Theater production of this holiday favorite. This year, enjoy a Stream on Demand performance on Dec 18 or 23, and recapture the magic of this enchanting event. Tickets are free, but donations are appreciated. For tickets, visit <https://bit.ly/37fGKIU>.

Saturday, Dec. 19 Cantabella Children's Chorus “Wishful Singing”

Holiday concert online will include favorites “Deck the Hall” and “Silent Night”. Link will be available December 19th at 4pm, through the rest of the evening. Cantabella has maintained training classes via zoom participation. Each child self-recorded for the concert. Each recording was post-processed to combine all voices into multi-part harmony. For link visit www.cantabella.org

Wednesday, Jan. 13 to Wednesday, May 19 Coffee Hour for Seniors

Zoom “Coffee Hour for Seniors” will resume once a month, on Wednesday mornings, beginning in January. The Zoom get-togethers will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Jan. 13, Feb. 17, March 17, April 14 and May 19. For more information, visit dublin.ca.gov/380/Special-Events.

ONGOING WEEKLY EVENTS

Livermore Downtown Farmers Market Open for the Season

Open Sundays, from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Carnegie Town Square (South K Street between Third and Fourth St.) 2155 Third St.

Pleasanton Farmers Market Open for the Season

Open Saturdays, from 10 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.

Livermore Valley Opera airs Friday Episodes

If you need a dose of opera while on lock-down, check out LV Opera on YouTube. There are new releases every Friday at 7 p.m. To subscribe, visit www.livermorevalleyopera.com.

Six Feet Apart Productions Shares Art From a Distance

Sunday Night Stories is an on-line show with people sharing true stories, poetry, comedy, music and more, featuring an eclectic mix of entertainment to feel connected in times of social distancing and self-isolation, live every week, on Sundays, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [facebook.com/pg/Six-Feet-Apart-Productions](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Six-Feet-Apart-Productions) or eventbrite.com/e/sunday-night-stories.

Stress Relief Recovery International

A confidential, peer-led, self-help group for stress relief will take place Sundays, at 2 p.m., via conference call. Get guidance on practicing a method developed 80 years ago by psychiatrist Abraham A. Low to replace the “defeatist babble of the brain, with secure thinking to help cope with the stressful events in our everyday lives. Call 925-515-604-9094, ID 192451547#.

VIRTUAL ONLINE EVENTS -AVAILABLE ANYTIME

Register for Virtual and Outdoor Activities

Do you want to learn a new skill, dabble in a new art form, get into shape, or finally take up that new hobby you've pushed back for so long? The Pleasanton Library and Recreation Department is now offering a wide variety of virtual and outdoor in-person courses this fall. Registration is open for everything from coding, web design

and engineering courses to art, public speaking, and outdoor group exercise. There are even courses on LEGO and Minecraft. Sign up now at <https://bit.ly/33BNAoU>.

EBRPD Brings “Parks to People”

East Bay Regional Park District is committed to the idea of lifelong learning and helping people make their own discoveries about local parks. The resources they have compiled are designed to be used at home, in a classroom or part of any online learning. For more information, visit www.ebparks.org/activities/digital_learning/default.htm.

LARPd Now on YouTube

Livermore Area Recreation & Park District is featuring videos for all ages with virtual activities, including Basketball Academy, Mystery Craft Making Activities and many more to come. Visit www.larpd.org to subscribe and receive notifications as new videos are available.

Music Together Tri-Valley Supports Early Childhood Development

This international, award-winning, early-childhood music program supports parents with songs and musical activities to enjoy with their children through play-based learning curriculum, designed to help everyone learn to sing in tune and keep a beat. For more information, visit www.musictogether.com.

Pacific Chamber Orchestra Offers Musical Podcast

During this time of challenge, PCO continues to bring everyone beautiful music made insightful. Conductor Lawrence Kohl is pleased to announce the launch of a series of podcasts of musician interviews and conversations about the music. Subscribe to listen at www.pacificchamber-orchestra.org.

Enter events online at www.independentnews.com/calendar or email calendar@independentnews.com for print.

SUNWALKER

(Continued from first page)

pleted. Board member Derek Eddy said the project should undergo review at two-year intervals for the first 10 years to ensure compliance. The two agreed the applicant would need to provide proof of potable water purchase.

“I’m concerned for the unique ecosystem of the North Livermore Valley. The dry agriculture that’s been in place for generations here is congruent with the special environmental needs related to sustaining what is left of the rare alkali sink wetlands.”

“A decision like this, for me, just like last month, is very, very, very difficult and affects a lot of people, and people that are actually friends of mine ... I hear everything that people say,” Eddy said, adding that the decision supports movement toward renewable energy.

Save North Livermore Valley (SNLV) — a grassroots group that formed to “safeguard the valley’s scenic beauty and open space from destruction by commercial power companies” — plans to file an appeal on the decision.

Chris O’Brien of SNLV wrote in a statement that it was disappointing to see the BZA move ahead without Beyer, who “previously questioned the propriety of constructing industrial solar facilities in North Livermore Valley.”

“What is most disappointing, however, is the failure of the two commissioners who approved the Sunwalker project to consider the numerous and sound objections made by residents of North Livermore Valley and the City of Livermore and representatives of local environmental organizations,” O’Brien continued. “Save North Livermore Valley is determined to preserve our agricultural land and open space for future generations. We will not allow in a matter of mere weeks the destruction of land that has for centuries been used for farming and ranching and today is restricted under Measure D and other laws for agricultural uses only.”

In recent weeks, SNLV — along with Friends of Livermore (FOL), Friends of Open Space and Vineyards (FOSV) and the Aramis ap-

plicant, who objected to the conditions set by the board — filed appeals on the larger 410-acre Aramis project, also in North Livermore. The hearing date for Aramis is now set for Jan. 12. In a letter addressed to Alameda

ranged from incompliances with Measure D and the Williamson Act to the destruction of open space and the scenic corridor. Some chimed in on the impracticality of using the land for grazing sheep.

County Planning Director Albert Lopez, requesting an extension on the Aramis hearing, FOL and FOSV indicated they too will consider filing appeals on the Sunwalker project.

The Dec. 10 Sunwalker decision followed public comment and a brief presentation from project applicant Kevin White, who addressed three concerns expressed by the community in previous meetings and communications. The three included the possibility of the panels creating a heat island effect, groundwater contamination and power not serving the local community.

“Although you know solar panels may trap incoming heat that reaches the space below the panels during the day and limit the radiation of that heat away from the ground at night, thus causing a slight local increase in temperature, it is most pronounced in the evenings and at night,” White said, touching on the heat island effect issue. “Those effects are highly localized and most pronounced when land below the panels is unvegetated.”

On water quality, White said the CDT within the photovoltaic modules is highly stable; even if the modules were to become broken or damaged, they would not mobilize from the glass. On energy exporting outside of California, he showed a map and noted that based on local consumption of power, it was most likely to stay in the region.

While some speakers thanked White for addressing concerns, the 22 public speakers — all of whom opposed moving forward with the project — pointed out other issues. Complaints

Public speaker Jackie Bowles lives in North Livermore and said she runs one of the largest flocks of sheep in Alameda County.

“I can tell you as a sheep producer that raising sheep on this land is not going to work,” Bowles said.

Patti Cole of the Friends of the Springtown Wetlands Preserve echoed the concern that the project was incompatible with Measure D. She was also one of several to note the county’s solar policy should be in place before moving forward with any of the projects.

“I’m concerned for the unique ecosystem of the North Livermore Valley,” Cole said. “The dry agriculture that’s been in place for generations here is congruent with the special environmental needs related to sustaining what is left of the rare alkali sink wetlands. In addition to the requisite North Livermore Valley soils, hydrology and climate, specific plants and animals play an ongoing, continuous dance to survive here.”

Imhof asked for a confirmation from staff that the project is allowable under Measure D. Staff read aloud the report, which states the project parcel is outside of the Urban Growth Boundary established by Measure D but falls under the large parcel agriculture land-use designation. The planning department states that it does not consider ground-mounted solar installations to be structures.

The Aramis appeal hearing is expected to take place Jan. 12, unless an extension is taken into consideration.

For a schedule of county meetings, visit <http://www.acgov.org/participate.htm>.

it is working to ensure an equitable distribution based on those health care workers in areas with highest risk for exposure.

“When we receive our vaccine allocations for health care workers, we are prepared to move quickly to vaccinate groups at greatest risk, as required by public health agencies, and based on our infectious disease leaders’ review of clinical evidence,” said Michelle Gaskill-Hames, senior vice president, for health plan and hospital operations at Kaiser Permanente Northern California.

The county’s first COVID-19 vaccination clinic is tentatively planned for Saturday, Sunday and Monday on the grounds of St. Rose Hospital in Hayward, where. St. Rose hospital workers and first responders will receive the vaccine. Simultaneous vaccination clinics are expected to take place at other hospitals in the county.

These early doses of COVID-19 vaccine come amid a surge of cases and hospitalization rates regionally and across the state, that health experts have described as the worst they have seen to date.

Dr. Nicholas Moss, Alameda County’s health officer, urged people to continue taking precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. That means the need for mask wearing, keeping a distance from other people, hand washing and limiting gatherings are not going away just yet.

“Vaccines are the light at the end of the tunnel, but we must continue to keep each other safe during the roll-out,” Moss said.

For more information on the county’s vaccine plan, visit https://bit.ly/Indy_VaccinePlan.

OBITUARIES

Joan Tabb Fisher Boer

Aug. 24, 1928 – Dec. 9, 2020



Joan was born in Montreal, Canada, on Aug. 24, 1928, the first child of Josephine Houston Smith Fisher and John Tabb Fisher.

The family’s early years were spent on the Main Line in Pennsylvania. Joan attended The Baldwin School in Bryn Mawr where she became captain of the field hockey team, and for whose teachers she retained fond memories throughout her life.

When Joan was 12, the family moved to San Francisco, where Joan attended Lowell High School. Graduating at the age of 15, she described the next few years as some of her duller, although some excitement was provided when she and other underage girls would sneak into the dance halls and meet sailors on shore leave.

Joan subsequently matriculated at the University of California, Berkeley, graduating in 1955 with a B.A. in English. There, she and her future husband, Garret Boer, met as actors in a drama department production of George Bernard Shaw’s “The Misalliance,” she playing Hypatia and he playing Lord Summerhays.

Joan relinquished her dream of pursuing an acting career in New York City after waking up to the splendor of the Yosemite Valley, having arrived late the previous night with Garret. The two settled eventually in Livermore, where Garret spent his career with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

For many years, the couple continued to pursue their passion for dramatic arts with the Cask and Mask Theater Company, which staged numerous productions in the old May School in Livermore’s rural outskirts. Later, Joan was a board member, actor, and director for several productions of The Encore Players. Her last stage appearance was in 2018 at the age of 90.



After several years as a housewife raising three children, Joan began work as a reporter for The Livermore Independent, also editing the Lively Arts section of that newspaper and continuing as a journalist with The Independent, The Valley Times, and the Alameda Newspaper Group until the early 1990s.

Subsequently, she volunteered with the Friends of the Livermore Library, editing the newsletter for several years and assisted various local arts associations with press releases. Joan also volunteered as a docent at the Oakland Museum of California and edited the Docent Newsletter.

Upon Garret’s death in 2007, Joan became a regular participant in services at St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Livermore, relishing her opportunities to read and discuss passages from both the Old and New Testaments.

Throughout her adult life,

Jean Stuart Bonde

Oct. 31, 1934 – Dec. 1, 2020



Jean Stuart Bonde, 86, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020.

Jean was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, on Oct. 31, 1934, to David and Flora (Moffat) Critchlow and was the beloved wife of Wayne Leo Bonde for the last 43 years.

Jean grew up in Livermore and graduated from Livermore High School. She worked as a civil service employee for the Department of Defense and later as a secretary at the Livermore VA Medical Center. Jean was an avid stamp collector and traveler, spending time in Europe and the Far East. Jean and Wayne traversed the U.S. five times in their motor home and visited all 21 Spanish

missions in California.

Jean was an animal lover and most passionate about her dogs and horses. She volunteered at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge as a tour bus guide and developed a love for the wild Chincoteague

Joan was a patron of the arts, focusing her support in recent years on Livermore’s Shakespeare’s Associates, while trekking to Ashland Oregon annually for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival from 1955 to 2019.

Dogged in recent years by macular degeneration and COPD, Joan nevertheless always maintained a sincere optimism and genuine interest in others, bringing joy into the lives of all who knew her.

A long-time admirer of Joe Biden, in 2020, Joan participated in a vast conspiracy of over 80 million people to deny Donald Trump a second term as president.

She is survived by her sister, Susan S. Purdy of New York City; daughter, Rebecca Davies, lately of LaGrange, Illinois; sons, Bruce Boer of Oakland, California, and Nicholas Boer of Livermore; grandchildren, Samuel Boer of Oakland, Anna Boer of Orinda, California, and Jake Davies and Molly Davies of Chicago, Illinois; cousin, David Webster of Boulder, Colorado; nephews and nieces, Christopher Purdy of Washington D.C., Mary Purdy of Seattle, Washington, Kimberly Fisher Robinson of Houston, Texas, and Robert Barry Fisher of Houston. Her parents, her brother Barry, and her husband Garret preceded her in death.

Joan was devoted to combating global warming. Donations in Joan’s memory can be made to the Sierra Club or other climate action organizations, St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, Livermore Library, Shakespeare’s Associates, Encore Players, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Oakland Museum of California, or other local arts organizations.

Joan lost her battle with COVID-19 in the early hours of Dec. 9, 2020. She will be profoundly missed.

ponies during the time she and Wayne lived there. Jean was also known for her love of Hershey’s chocolate and always having her door open for gatherings of family, friends, and the Buy Back Babes.

In addition to her husband Wayne, Jean is survived by her children, Kathy (David) Ferreira, David (Pamela) Lasorda, Wayne (Brenda) Bonde, Mary Bonde, Juliann (John) Banke, and Matthew (Dana Kristina) Bonde. She is also survived by 13 grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

A memorial tribute will be held in the future on Chincoteague Island for family and friends. Arrangements by Copeland’s Sewickley.

Maria Juanita “Ruby” Herrera Costello

Nov. 24, 1932 – Dec. 1, 2020



Mom passed away peacefully at home in the loving care of her three daughters, ACE Hospice, and Assisted Living Provider, Silvia (and Jose) Galdamez.

Ruby was a devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She was one of seven children raised by loving parents, Patrocinia Lobato Herrera and Benjamin Herrera, in El Guache, New Mexico.

She was preceded in death by siblings, Lila Roque, Christina Chavez, Rita Serna, and Tony Herrera. She is survived by children, Marina Sara Costello, Margaret Silvia Single (Jerry), and Patrocinia Katrina Rice (Dennis Jenkins); grandchildren, Tiffany Marie Brill (Jason), and Michael Steven Lee (Lovelie Rose); and two great-grandsons Michael Jayden Antony Lee and Raiden Reign Lee. Ruby is also survived by sisters, Tillie Fernandez and Lucy Herrera; and sister-in-law, Sue Herrera (Tony); and siblings, Connie Morrison, Alice Madrid (Daryl), Betty Ann Herrera, and Benjie Herrera (Joyce).

She was a 1951 Espanola

High graduate, where she further developed an inquisitive nature, passion for life-long learning, and desire to read all books under the sun and share that knowledge. She lived her adult life in Oakland, Hayward, and Livermore. She’s a retired teamster with Emeryville Del Monte, worked at Oakland Wells Fargo, San Leandro Bank of America, and loved working at Hayward and Pleasanton St. Vincent de Paul; and Costco Livermore.

At St. Vincent’s, it was her privilege and honor to reach out and care for those in need in her

Brian Tibbetts (“AwPa”)

Apr. 22, 1948 – Dec. 7, 2020



Brian was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and became a U.S. citizen at age 9, when his family relocated to California.

Brian began his career in parks and recreation in Foster City, California. Brian loved the small-town feel of Livermore and eventually went to work for LARPD; he retired after more than 25 years of service. Brian participated in many professional organizations over the course of his career, and worked with many of the community groups here in Livermore. He made many friends along the way. Brian was called “AwPa” by

his granddaughter, Juliet, from the time she could talk, and the nickname stuck. His family all call him AwPa.

Brian is survived by his wife, Christine; daughters, Jennifer

local community with loving compassion. She touched so many lives with her historical stories, acts of kind-heartedness, commitment and unconditional love for friends and family.

A private family service will be held Dec. 29. Her arrangements were cared for by Callaghan Mortuary and St. Michael’s Cemetery in Livermore. She will rest in the St. Michael’s the Archangel Section, row 6, marker 15.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making donations to her childhood church, San Jose Renovation Committee, c/o Thomas Cordova, P.O. Box 1381, Espanola, New Mexico, 87532.

The family would like to thank Vineyard Village community for providing a loving environment and extend our gratitude to ACE Hospice for their kindness, compassion, and expertise.

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

Tibbetts (Livermore), Lindsay Tibbetts Heuer (Kurt; Redding, California); granddaughter, Juliet Jones (Livermore); brother, Barry Tibbetts (Oregon); sister, Lesley Tibbetts (San Diego); and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there will be a Celebration of Life with his immediate family in Santa Cruz, California, a special place to Brian that holds many family memories. A memorial bench will be placed at his neighborhood park where he spent many hours with his granddaughter from the time she was born.

VACCINE

(Continued from first page)

to individual facilities to administer it — first to skilled nursing facilities where the most ill people are living, and then to other residential care facilities for the elderly — Clanon said.

The county aims to start early in some of the highest-risk neighborhoods in an attempt to get ahead of the current surge of expected infections. Throughout the pandemic, the Alameda County Public Health Department reported Black and Latino residents experienced a disproportionate rate of infection.

Federal health agencies and the California Department of Public Health developed the distribution timeline. The discretion of local health departments over prioritization is not entirely clear-cut, but the county works closely with community organizations to ensure distribution is fair and equitable, officials say.

Clanon reported that all of the county’s “911-receiving” hospitals with emergency rooms have been allocated at least some doses of the vaccine, that will initially be distributed by the health department. In addition, doses will be set aside to inoculate medical first responders, which include paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters, Clanon said.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced last week that VA Palo Alto Health Care System, which operates VA Medical Center-Livermore, was selected as one of 37 VA sites to first receive the vaccine. The government selected the health care system for its ability to vaccinate a large number of people and to store doses of the vaccine at extremely cold temperatures.

The Livermore campus could begin administering shots to front-line health care workers there as early as Friday, a hospital spokeswoman confirmed.

There are multiple vaccines in the pipeline, including another “highly effective” COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna that the FDA aims to authorize for emergency use on Friday, with two additional vaccines likely to follow in the next month to six weeks. Most will require two injections, with approximately 30 days between doses.

The Pfizer-BioNTech, the first out the gate, appears to be safe with an efficacy rate of 95% in preventing COVID-19 based on a large-scale clinical trial. But it also brings significant logistical challenges. It requires a precisely timed delivery through a temperature-controlled supply chain.

Clanon, with the Alameda County health department, said most of the county’s hospitals have obtained the ultra-low temperature freezers necessary to store the vaccine, clearing the path for the vaccine to ship directly to larger health care providers, such as Kaiser Permanente and Sutter Health.

Stanford Health Care – ValleyCare expects to receive 975 doses of the Pfizer vaccine sometime this week, and plans to begin administering to high-risk health care workers on Friday, said Denise Bouillercie, senior director of government and community relations with the nonprofit healthcare organization.

Meanwhile, Kaiser Permanente — which has medical offices in Livermore, Dublin, Pleasanton and San Ramon, as well as a cancer center in Dublin — says



Each year, Jacky Poulson raises funds to help those in need secure Tri-Valley Wheels bus tickets during the holidays. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Bus Ticket Drive to Help Neediest

For the fifth consecutive holiday season, Jacky Poulson is asking the community to help provide a gift of mobility for some of the Tri-Valley’s most financially struggling residents. Those who most depend most on public transportation are often the least able to afford fares. The annual bus ticket drive provides thousands of free Tri-Valley Wheels bus tickets every year and helps defray transportation costs, a significant burden for many households, particularly during the current economic crisis. “It’s my mission this year that everyone in our community who needs public transportation to obtain services such as meals, groceries and health care, can receive bus tickets to transport them there,” Poulson said. “No one should have to forgo these services just because they cannot afford the cost of transportation.” For low-income households in the state’s metropolitan areas, transportation is the third largest budget item behind food and housing. Even when financially struggling people who depend on public transit find ways to cover transportation costs, the trade-offs including added stress, anxiety and less money for other necessities such as food, were among the findings of a study by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Following the three-year study, the regional transportation planning agency launched a pilot program this summer that offers discounted transit fares for low-income adults on transit systems that use the clipper fare payment system. The annual fundraiser is administered by Asbury United Methodist Church in Livermore. Tickets purchased from the proceeds are given to the Livermore Homeless Refuge, Open Heart Kitchen, Asbury United Methodist Church, which provides showers and laundry service for the homeless, Interfaith Sharing Food Pantry, Axis Community Health, Tri-Valley Haven, and Partners for Change. To donate by mail, send a check, made out to Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave., Livermore, CA 94550. Write “BUS TICKETS” on the check memo line and on the envelope, and include your email address to limit overhead expenses for sending donation receipts. To donate online, visit <https://bit.ly/2020bustickets>. A credit card fee charged by the vendor is added, so 100% of the donation goes to support the program.

Firehouse Arts Center Presents Holiday Concert

Firehouse Arts Center has signed up with We Banjo 3 to offer a virtual holiday concert with a Celtic flair – “A Winter Wonderful.” We Banjo 3 headlines a festive evening of traditional holiday and contemporary Irish, old-time American and Bluegrass music. They will be joined by some very special guests, including: Béla Fleck & Abigail Washburn, Skerkyvore, The Whileaways, BackWest and Ajeet. The concert will stream live on Friday, Dec. 18, at 5 p.m. We Banjo 3 (WB3) is comprised of two sets of brothers, Enda & Fergal Scahill and Martin & David Howley. They continue to push musical boundaries while maintaining an unwavering devotion to the essential audience experience.

WB3 seamlessly converge the shared and varied traditions of Americana, Bluegrass, and Celtic music with pop-sensible songcraft to create a truly unique and gratifying signature sound. Brilliantly commanded instruments - banjo, fiddle, mandolin, guitar, and percussion - effortlessly elevate lead singer David Howley’s propulsive voice. Live on stage, their songs carry the listener along until, at the perfect moment, the band crescendos into catchy choruses with pitch perfect harmonies. Having sold-out their premiere performance at the Firehouse Arts Center in 2017, and almost selling out two shows on their return engagement in 2018, We Banjo 3 wowed audiences with their high-energy show, virtuosic instrumentation

and warm harmonies. The band will stream live from their hometown of Galway, Ireland, even though two of the brothers now reside in Nashville. Although they are unable to join audiences in person this holiday season, they are excited to offer a virtual experience to their fans around the globe. Tickets may be purchased through firehouse-arts.org. Tickets are \$20 for the general ticket, with limited edition merchandise bundles available that include a ticket. All ticket-buyers will receive a unique link which provides access to the livestream. The link will remain live until Dec. 26, to allow for repeat or delayed viewing. The Firehouse Arts Center is owned and operated by the City of Pleasanton

and dedicated to inspiring passion through the arts. The center is comprised of the 227-seat Firehouse Theater, the 2000 square foot Harrington Gallery, classrooms and rehearsal space, the grand atrium lobby, and the famous interior glass bridge. With world-class performing and visual arts, exciting interactive programs for all ages, and a state-of-the-art venue which opened in 2010, we combine the sophistication of the culturally rich Bay Area arts landscape with the hospitality and intimacy of our own hometown. The Firehouse Arts Center is located at 4444 Railroad Ave., in downtown Pleasanton. Follow them on Twitter @FirehouseArts, Instagram @FirehouseArts, and Facebook at www.facebook.com/FirehouseArtsPleasanton.

Youth Group Volunteers Brighten Nonprofit Garden

Volunteers from two local youth organizations, the Breaking BEARriers Youth Leadership Club and Lapis Lazuli Art Club, have created a mural to brighten up the Fertile GroundWorks Garden of Grace at Asbury United Methodist Church in Livermore. The colorful 8-foot-high, 24-foot-long mural depicts four people, including a young child, working in a field of row crops and harvesting onions, carrots, tomatoes, and other produce, with the church in the background. It was painted on the side of a container used to store garden implements. More than 30 volunteers worked on the mural. “The talent and creativ-

ity of these young people is amazing, and we are so happy to have their wonderful work on display in our garden,” said Brenda Kusler, executive director for Fertile GroundWorks. “The day the clubs came to volunteer with us turned into a spectacular journey.” The nonprofit Fertile GroundWorks encourages members of the community to grow food for themselves and others. In 2019, it harvested more than 23,000 pounds of organic produce for the Open Heart Kitchen, Alameda County Food Bank, Culinary Angels, and other local food banks. Members of Breaking BEARriers, formed last year by six middle school stu-

dents to develop teamwork and leadership skills, began volunteering at the Garden of Grace earlier this summer, which led to a discussion about painting a mural on the fading plywood side of the container. With some crossover in membership, the project soon involved the newly formed Lapis Lazuli Art Club. “It was like the universe affirmatively answering our request,” said Kusler. “We were overjoyed.” Kusler said members of both clubs started the design and prep work in September and began the actual sketching and painting in October. On Friday and Saturday nights, the volunteers would use a projector to trace the

design on the container and then spend six to eight hours painting the following day. They applied the final weatherproofing in mid-November. Kusler estimated it took about 300 volunteer hours to complete the mural. She added that all the volunteers have offered to come back over the years to touch up the mural. “The joke [at the dedication] was that the muralists would all be coming back in 20 years with their own kids to teach them about painting murals,” Kusler said. The mural can be viewed behind the Asbury Church, at 4743 East Ave.

Winery Displays Las Positas Artwork

Artwork by four photography and graphic-design students at Las Positas College -- Alexa Faulkner, Buffy Davis, Jay Sarkis Kelly, and Susan Lewis -- is now on display at Cuda Ridge Wines in Livermore. The “Art is Essential” exhibit emphasizes art as a form of self-expression during the isolation imposed by the pandemic. It includes photographs of Yosemite National Park during fall, abstract oil paintings, and cyanotypes, a process that gives photographs a cyan-blue coloring.

The exhibit was arranged by Liz McWhorter, outreach specialist for the Arts & Humanities program at Las Positas College, and Larry Dino, an owner in the winery. The artwork, which can be seen throughout the winery, will be on display through January 2021. However, because of heightened pandemic restrictions, the winery is currently open only for curbside pick-up from noon to 4:30p.m., Friday through Sunday. Dino said the exhibit will be open for limited viewing by request,

but the winery’s retail store and tasting room will be closed. Cuda Ridge has been supporting local artists by displaying their work for several years. McWhorter said she proposed the exhibit to provide some “light in a dark time.” For Faulkner, the youngest of the four artists, this was also the first time seeing her work on public display. “Seeing my art on the wall is a completely different experience from posting it on Instagram or putting it on a website,” Faulkner said. “It’s incredible.”

In-Home Care Continues for Former Lab Workers

Nuclear Care Partners, which provides free in-home care to former atomic workers who have developed illnesses due to exposure to radiation and toxic chemicals, said this week it remains committed to patient care despite the COVID-19 pandemic. “To continue this needed in-home care, our care teams are taking extra safety precautions and have been equipped with the necessary critical supplies to lessen the risk of transmission and

keep our patients as safe as possible,” said Laura Welsh, local community outreach manager. Nuclear Care Partners serves former workers at Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia national laboratories, many of whom face various lung diseases and cancer as a result of their workplace exposure. “We are well-staffed and prepared with the proper personal protective equipment to care for our patients,

whether they are COVID-19 positive or presumptive positive,” Welsh said. “We will continue to stand by our patients and care for them in their greatest time of need.” Founded in 2011, Nuclear Care Partners was the first licensed medical provider to receive accreditation under the federal Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act. Former laboratory workers can call (925) 453-3805 to see if they are eligible for at-home care.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

LIVERMORE RESIDENTS: Share your talents with the community by volunteering on one of the City of Livermore’s advisory bodies. We are accepting applications now through Sunday, December 27, 2020.

Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District Board of Trustees (1 vacancy)
Join us in determining general policies to be followed controlling mosquitoes and limiting the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases.

Beautification Committee (2 vacancies)
Join us in working to preserve the natural beauty and habitat of Livermore.

Commission for the Arts (4 vacancies)
Join us in promoting Livermore as a vibrant and stimulating environment for artists and audiences, young and old, to experience the performing, visual, and literary arts.

Historic Preservation Commission (1 vacancy)
Join us in identifying, protecting, and preserving Livermore’s historic resources. The Commission’s successes are visible in the beauty of Livermore’s historic structures and landmarks.

Housing Authority (1 at-large and 1 tenant)
Join us in administering and overseeing low-income housing units and the Section Eight Voucher Program for subsidized housing.

Youth Advisory Commission (1 youth vacancy)
Join the commission in bringing together young people and adults, and private and public sectors of the community, to address responsibility for the care, health, safety, welfare, and education of Livermore’s young people.

SAVE THE DATE! Interviews will be tentatively held the evenings of December 28 and 29, 2020. For more information or to apply, please visit www.cityoflivermore.net/AB, call the City Clerk’s office at (925) 960-4200, or email us at cityclerk@cityoflivermore.net.

SEEKING FREELANCE REPORTERS

The Independent is growing its network of professional freelance reporters for ongoing coverage of news in the Tri-Valley region. We are currently seeking journalists who can cover events, such as city council meetings or breaking news; along with in-depth topics, such as land-use policies, COVID-19, homelessness or environmental issues. Please note: we are not seeking feature writers at this time.

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- Please email Aly Brown (aly@independentnews.com) a cover letter, resume and a link to your online portfolio with “Freelance Reporter Application” in the subject line.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574416

The following person(s) doing business as: Del Rancho Supermercado, 1565 Olivina Ave, Suite B, Livermore, CA 94551, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Maricela Diaz Diaz, 810 Kings Canyon CT, Tracy, CA 95376. 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: November 1, 2020. Signature of Registrant/s: Maricela Diaz Diaz, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 10, 2020. Expires November 10, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4797. Published November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574304

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. College Quest, 2. College Trek, 3. College Trek Tours, 4. U Care Learning Foundation, 5. Fraternizing, 4101 Dublin Blvd. Ste F #219, Dublin, CA 94568, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): College Quest LLC, 4101 Dublin Blvd. Ste F #219, 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: 11/01/2020. Signature of Registrant/s: Janet McCarroll, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 3, 2020. Expires November 3, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4798. Published November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574355

The following person(s) doing business as: Taqueria 3 Taquitos, 1565 Olivina Avenue, Livermore, CA 94551, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ma Antonia Garcia Esparza, 410 Gonzalez St, Tracy, CA 95376. 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: Ma Antonia Garcia, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 6, 2020. Expires November 6, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4799. Published November 26, December 3, 10, 17, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574533

The following person(s) doing business as: Balanced Books by Brenda, 127 Summertree Drive, Livermore, CA 94551, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Brenda McCormick, 127 Summertree Drive, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant

first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/1/2016. Signature of Registrant/s: Brenda McCormick, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 17, 2020. Expires November 17, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4800. Published December 3, 10, 17, 24, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574532

The following person(s) doing business as: Beauty by Frendi, 4625 First at #150, Pleasanton, CA 94566, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sorayatorn Exum, 498 Colusa Way, 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: November 1, 2020. Signature of Registrant/s: Sorayatorn Exum, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 17, 2020. Expires November 17, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4801. Published December 3, 10, 17, 24, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574532

The following person(s) doing business as: Math Atom, 3168 Paseo Granada, Pleasanton, CA 94566, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Stephen Ng, 3168 Paseo Granada, 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: 11/01/2020. Signature of Registrant/s: Stephen Ng, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 18, 2020. Expires November 18, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 4802. Published December 3, 10, 17, 24, 2020.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. RG 20076346

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Senait M. Abrahah 1250 Lakeland Dr. Livermore, CA 94551 (408) 786-4336, filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name: Senait Mesfin Abrahah
Proposed Name: Senait Mesfin Piccigallo
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: 1/22/2021

Time: 11:00 AM
Dept: 17
The address of the court is: Alameda County Administration Building 1221 Oak Street Oakland, CA 94612
A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: The Independent Newspaper 2250 First Street, Livermore, CA 94550
Dated: September 23, 2020
/s/: Judge Desautels,
The Independent Legal No. 4803 Published December 17, 24, 31, January 7, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574355

The following person(s) doing business as: Elenita's Coffee, 7054 Dublin Meadows ST. APT C, Dublin CA 94568, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Enrique Rojas, 7054 Dublin Meadows ST. APT C, Dublin CA 94568. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s: Enrique Rojas, Founder/ CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2020. Expires December 3, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4804 Published December 17, 24, 31, January 7, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574784

The following person(s) doing business as: Nguyen Solutions, 3029 Leger CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ricky Nguyen, 3029 Leger CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588. 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: 01/01/2020. Signature of Registrant/s: Ricky Nguyen, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 24, 2020. Expires November 24, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4805 Published December 17, 24, 31, January 7, 2020.

C L A S S I F I E D S

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Saturdays - Dogs & Puppies at Farmer's Market in Pleasanton. The location is Deluchi Park, 4501 First St. Hours: 10:00am to 1:00pm.
Saturdays & Sundays - Kittens at Dublin PetSmart,

6960 Amador Plaza Rd.
Hours: 11am to 3pm.
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Follow TRI-VALLEY ANIMAL RESCUE on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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Cat & kitten adoptions now at the new Livermore Petco on Saturdays from 10:00AM to 2:30PM. We have many adorable, tame kittens that have been tested for FIV & FELV, altered & vaccinated. We also have adult cats & ranch cats for adoption.

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65) HELP WANTED

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155) NOTICES

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Culinary Angels Moving Kitchen Operations to Irby Ranch

Culinary Angels, which provides nutrient-rich meals to people with cancer and other serious health challenges, will be moving its kitchen operations from the First Presbyterian Church in Livermore to the new Sunflower Hill residential facility at Irby Ranch in Pleasanton early next month.

Sunflower Hill is a non-profit organization that develops independent living communities and provides vocational and life-skills

programs for adults with developmental disabilities. Irby Ranch, which opened in September, includes 31 housing units.

In addition to using the commercial kitchen at Irby Ranch to prepare meals for delivery throughout Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin, Culinary Angels will offer meals to residents of the Sunflower Hill community.

Lisa McNaney, executive director of Culinary Angels, said the move to Irby Ranch

provided “a better opportunity to grow the way we would like,” expanding services to those facing serious health issues -- while also introducing “our healing meals to another group of individuals.”

As part of its vocational and life-skills program, Sunflower Hill operates a garden at Hagemann Ranch in Livermore that grows thousands of pounds of organic fruits and vegetable each year.

For the past three years, much of that produce has been donated to Culinary Angels or sold at the Sunflower Hill garden stand. Culinary Angels also partners with Fertile Ground-Works, another nonprofit community garden program.

McNaney added that Culinary Angels would be “ever grateful” to First Presbyterian Church for the use of its kitchen facilities almost since the nonprofit was started in 2016.

