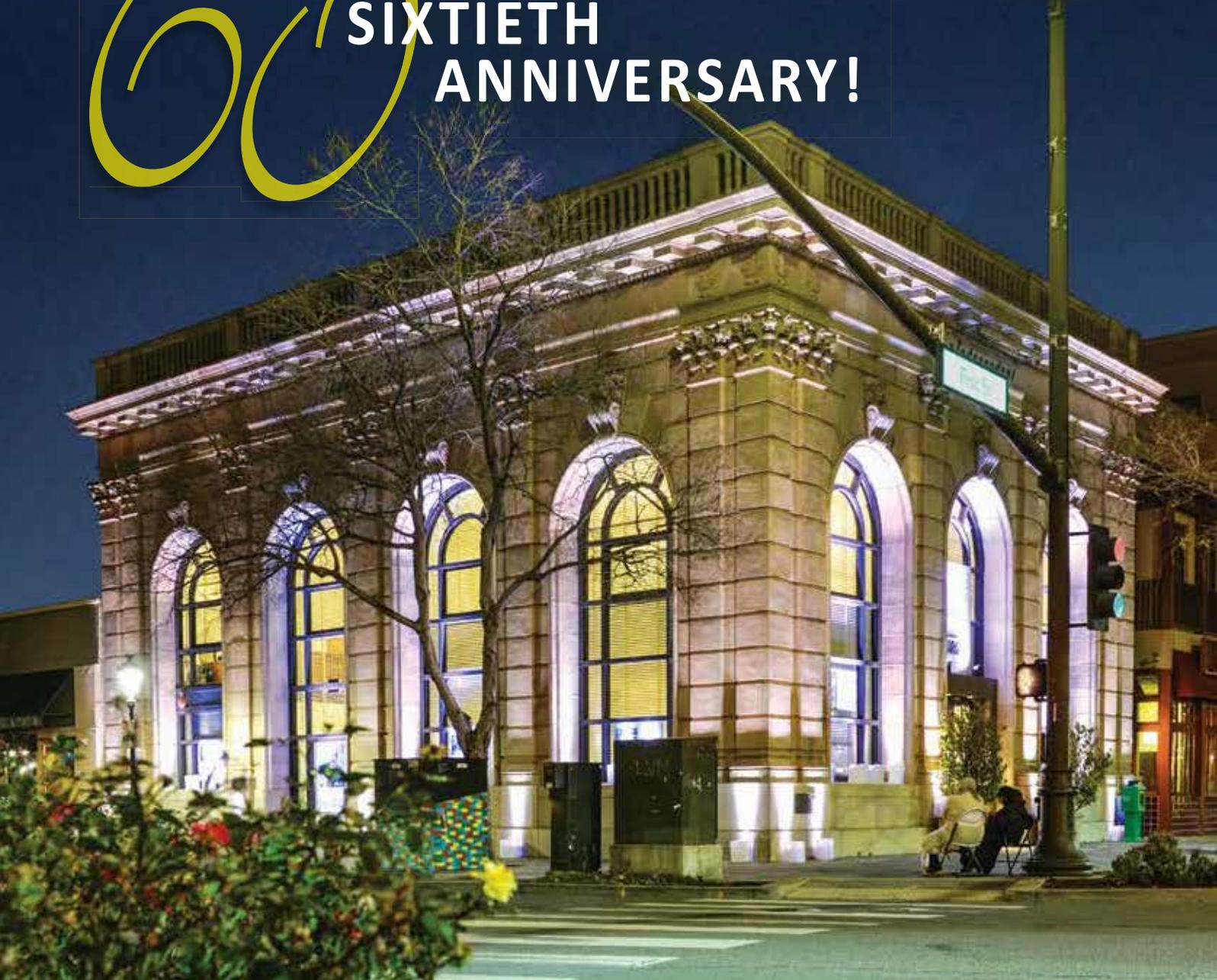

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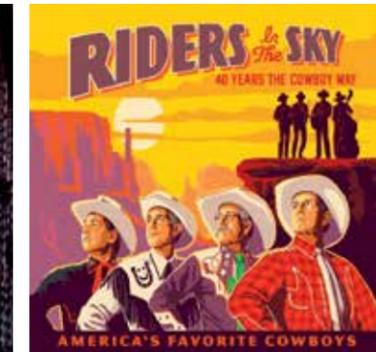
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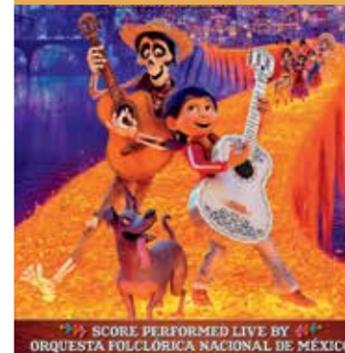
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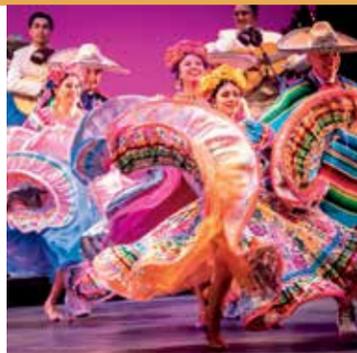
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Ruth Roberts

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OFFICE MANAGER
Virginia Hoato

COVER PHOTO: The Bank of Italy is lit up on Jan. 22, 2022, marking its 100th anniversary. The building is now the home of The Independent, located at 2250 First Street in Livermore.

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The Independent Publisher's Perspective

Independent Publisher Joan Seppala believes that residents have focused strongly on three values throughout the 60 years that The Independent has covered news in the Tri-Valley. As a result, remarkable communities have emerged in our region.

Starting in the 1960s, citizens fought for measures that prevent urban sprawl and protect our surrounding open space. Unlike so many other cities in urban regions like the Bay Area, our citizens are passionate about saving our natural environment.

Support for the disadvantaged has been a theme in the Tri-Valley. For decades, a broad range of residents has worked to address the needs of those with limited means. With the increased hardship that the pandemic has placed on the less fortunate, citizens have stepped up. Our commitment has grown even stronger.

Arts and science, the cultural interests of the community, are unique. Livermore Valley Arts has booked internationally known performers at the Bankhead Theater. The Pleasanton Firehouse Art Center also engages a range of performers in its theater and offers the city a quality art gallery. The arts offer entertainment, but they can provide profundity as well -- a depth of understanding and feeling that can be transformative.

The Tri-Valley's attention to science has expanded with the news last December and again this July that Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's

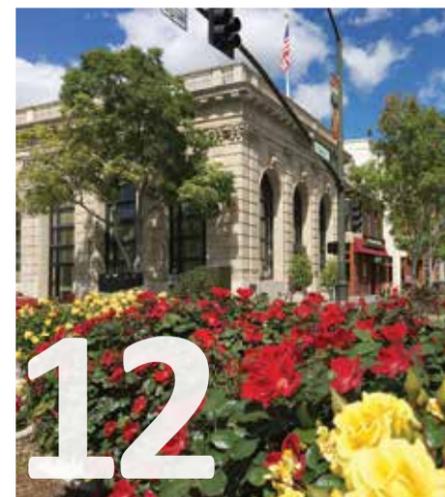
fusion project has achieved ignition, and as a result, international acclaim. The work of its scientists is recognized not only at the lab, but also in the community. Many are drawn to perform leadership roles to deal with climate change and water pollution, in addition to public science education. A host of them use their analytic skills to address other problems challenging the community.

Although the Tri-Valley's dedication to the environment and the disadvantaged has been momentous, in the future, we will need more commitment. Urban growth boundaries and our environment increasingly are being threatened, and homeless numbers have grown.

However, the Tri-Valley's arts and science achievements are not endangered. They should be able to expand.

Early on, The Independent has supported the Tri-Valley's values, and will continue to do so. The commitment of The Independent's staff and publisher throughout the years has been unwavering, even when advertisers have boycotted us, and letter writers have disparaged us personally.

We believe that the values and determination of those in the Tri-Valley will create solutions that are revolutionary. Others will emulate our communities. We won't conquer surrounding regions as the Romans did. Instead, like the Athenians, we will become an example that others will follow.



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THE BANK OF ITALY'S STORIED PAST

On Jan. 22, 2022, The Independent celebrated the 100th anniversary of its building on the corner of First Street and North Livermore Avenue in downtown Livermore. Before becoming the home to the area's longest standing newsroom, the beautiful work of architecture was the Bank of Italy, founded in 1922 by Amadeo Pietro (A. P.) Giannini — a Californian icon.

Joan Seppala, The Independent publisher who owns the building with her husband, Lynn, said the structure was built by a man whose values she deeply admires.

"Throughout California, A. P. Giannini took extraordinary actions to support the disadvantaged," Seppala said. "At the same time, in the very heart of our community, his building provided an inspiring architectural experience for his wealthy and low-income customers. The Livermore Bank of Italy is a monument; it celebrates both Giannini's ethics and his uplifting vision."

"Giannini is still highly respected for his generosity, vision and business practices," said Toni Sterling, a former bank employee with a vast knowledge of



A group photo of staff and customers during opening day at the Bank of Italy, Jan. 22, 1922. The historic site is now home to The Independent newspaper.

Giannini's history.

"He did two things," Sterling said. "He required that bank managers speak Italian so there would be no discrimination against Italian immigrants, and he was among the first to loan money to middle class people, not keeping the money circulating among the wealthy."

Sterling added that — especially during WWII — Giannini also aided many women, who traditionally could not receive loans without a husband.

"He made sure that the loan officers were just as generous toward women as they had been for men,"

Sterling said. "The culture shifted to acknowledge that often women were supporting their families — they needed financial support to build businesses, to buy basic things. Women were the backbone of this country during WWII; they kept it going."

Livermore resident Ann Giannini — who married into the family — said Giannini lent money to people "on a handshake." For example, she noted he helped to establish a little farming community in El Cerrito with a loan on nothing more than a handshake.

In 1916, several Livermore banks consolidated with the Bank of Italy, then housed in the McLeod building. In 1920, The Bank of Italy — later known as the Bank of America — announced its intention to build a new building at the northeast corner of First Street and Livermore Avenue.

"Livermore was growing; it was not a one-industry boom town, but rather a

focus of many types of commerce," said Jeff Kaskey, a member of the Livermore Heritage Guild. "Ultimately, that may have been why the Bank of Italy found the town interesting."

Giannini is credited with introducing branch banking in California. His Livermore branch became the 13th, one of hundreds he later acquired throughout the state.

"If Giannini could (find success) coming from a farming family — a second-generation American — then that would be possible for other Italian Americans or any immigrants," Sterling said. "All of that was set in motion with the business practices that he demonstrated. ... He was an unusually gifted man when it came to being concerned about the well-being of other people."

In January, the Seppalas acquired a mosaic portrait of Giannini, which was part of the "50 Faces Collection" created by young artists for Naonis, an Italian nonprofit cultural association. They hung the mosaic in the building, thus reestablishing an old banking tradition.

"Any Bank of America building you went into had a portrait of Giannini in it," Ann Giannini explained. "In his Alameda bank, it is still there in the lobby."

Guglielmo Zanette, art curator and representative of Naonis, called it an honor "to participate in the rediscovery of such a significant figure like A. P. Giannini, who contributed greatly to the growth of California."

"We wanted to pay tribute to him with an extraordinary mosaic portrait that we brought here from Italy

(continued on pg. 17)



A view of The Independent building circa early 1970s.

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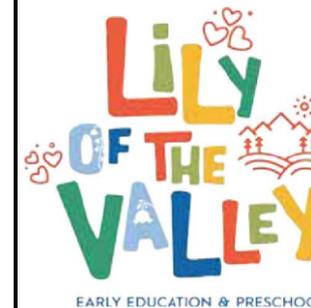
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HAPPY 60TH ANNIVERSARY!

By Bruce Henderson

When I mentioned to an old friend who was an Independent delivery boy in his early teens that the newspaper was about to celebrate its 60th anniversary, he said, “I can’t believe they’re the last one standing!”

I knew exactly what he meant, because I was an Independent reporter in the 1970s during the heyday of the great newspaper battle in the Tri-Valley between three dueling publishers: two well-heeled men, conservative publishing titans, both of whom owned a string



Bruce Henderson

of successful papers—and our own “independent” Joan Kinney Seppala, who was fueled not by a bottomless reservoir of dollars, but by equal amounts of vision, energy and commitment.

At times, it did seem unlikely we would survive the competition. Who could have bet on us when the other papers habitually ran articles that advertisers loved, while oftentimes we did not? Yet, we made it, as many community papers have not, and as others are continuing to fail at alarming rates.

That’s not to say money didn’t get tight for The Independent, because it did. But we were never driven by the bottom dollar, rather by the issues that needed to be covered and the stories that had to be written. That direction came from our publisher. Today, that ethos still drives The Independent.

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Note: I wrote the article below ten years ago for The Independent’s 50th anniversary edition. It’s a personal account of what it was like to be an Independent reporter, but I think more importantly it says something about why and how this underdog of a paper outlasted them all.

“My Golden Age of Journalism”

In 2005, I met Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee at a Washington D.C. cocktail party at the home of NBC’s Tim Russert. Gushing a bit, I told the legendary editor that as a young reporter in the 1970s – after the Post won a Pulitzer for its Watergate coverage – I aspired to work for him, a hokey but true line I’m sure he had heard hundreds of times.

“I wrote you a letter and even sent you clips. You were very kind to answer back and say some nice things.”

Bradlee nodded, and asked politely where I had worked.

“At a small, muckraking newspaper in Livermore, California,” I said. “I was lucky enough to have a gutsy woman publisher who gave us the freedom to report even if it cost the paper advertisers, which at times it did.”

His eyebrows shot up and he grinned. “I was lucky like that, too.”

Bradlee said his own career began at a small, muckraking paper in New Hampshire. We agreed that starting out someplace other than at a large metropolitan newspaper had been a great way to launch our journalism careers, because smaller papers offered opportunities to cover varied events and people.

I have long believed that had I gone to work for the San Francisco Chronicle at the age (23) I came to The Independent in 1970, I would have been delegated to writing obits and the like for years as I waited for experienced reporters to die, be fired, or otherwise move on before I won a coveted beat like city hall. Instead, I hit the deck running at The Independent, covering local politics – city councils, school districts, local members of Congress, state legislators – as well as myriad other news and feature stories. Whether I generated the idea or it was assigned to me by editor Bob Several, nothing was off limits to this young reporter. And boy, did I push the envelope.

In 1973 – the same year the Post won its Pulitzer for Watergate – I took it upon myself to investigate conditions at the county’s Santa Rita Jail. One day, while snooping around on jail property, I was arrested and thrown into a holding cell at the very penal facility I was investigating. I was sprung from behind bars a few hours later by Walt Hecox, The Independent’s resident member of the Establishment. Naturally, Walt was on a first-name basis with Municipal Judge Joe Schenone, who not only decided my bail, but presided at my trial, which turned into the longest jury trial in Livermore’s history (four days) before my acquittal. I then turned around and with the help of the ACLU, sued the

county sheriff for not allowing the press to interview inmates. In an out-of-court settlement, the sheriff agreed to end his no-interview policy, and soon, I returned to the jail to conduct the first press interview at Santa Rita.

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When it was time for me to move on in 1975 to other reporting and writing horizons, I took with me everything I had learned and practiced at The Independent – getting the facts right, interviewing all kinds of people about all kinds of things, distilling every story to its very essence so the readers will care, and doing it all by a deadline. These tools served me well as a magazine writer in the 1980s and are used by me today in my book-writing career.

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THE INDEPENDENT'S ROOTS RUN DEEP

For the past 60 years, The Independent has covered the environment, social issues and arts and science from the grassroots level, not from the top, looking down.

A social issue of the 1960s led to the creation of the newspaper. Fresh from receiving her MA degree from the University of Chicago, Joan Seppala, who before her marriage to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) scientist Lynn Seppala, was Joan Kinney, tried to obtain a news reporting job in the Bay Area. All she was offered were "society news" jobs, the standard slot for women journalists in those days.

An editor of the San Francisco Chronicle waved his arms across the newsroom filled with 100 or so reporters, and told her, "See, they are all men."

Undaunted, Seppala found a job with the Livermore Pioneer, a newly formed branch of the Danville Pioneer. The paper folded in a few weeks.

Seppala could see that there was an energetic, diverse community in Livermore and throughout the Valley, with farmers, ranchers, LLNL scientists, and actors. With the help of four newly found Bay Area investors – Nick Cox, Miller Ream, Paul Denison and David Knott – she launched The Independent. The first issue was dated Sept. 22, 1963.

The next 60 years proved to be quite a journey for the publisher, the staff and the community.

Founded by a woman who had to create her own journalism career and was interested in the political issues of the day, The Independent saw to it that residents could voice their concerns regarding rapid, unfettered development. Spokespersons were quoted in leading stories, which caused many residents to



The Independent staff in the early years is shown above with publisher Joan Seppala front row center, Dana McGaugh to her left, David Lowell on her right, Bob Seval and Janet Armatrout behind her.

unite to form a citizen-led group that sought to slow down the mushrooming growth in the valley.

Longtime Independent editor Bob Seval, who died in 2012, once succinctly summed up the growth battles in the valley. There were two political parties, he said. One was comprised of those who wanted to continue the accepted development patterns common in the region. The other was the residentialist party, which wanted to see the people who live here control the planning for their cities.

The Independent's reporting ensured that the various aspects of the growth issue were told thoroughly. The impacts of the rapid growth included double sessions in schools, strain on water and sewer utilities and heavy air pollution. One year, there were more than 100 clean-air violation days in the valley.

The foul air prompted a Livermore resident to call a press conference during which he wore a gas mask. A Pleasanton resident showed up at a city council meeting, also wearing a gas mask. He too made a speech about air pollution.



Joan Seppala, left, with longtime Independent editor Janet Armatrout.



Pictured at the new offices of The Independent in the historic Bank of Italy are (from left) Lynn Seppala, Joan Seppala, David Lowell, Robert Seval and Gale Marshall.

(continued on pg. 46)

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It takes a village to put The Independent out each week, and over the years we have had many talented and dedicated staff come through our doors.

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Joan Seppala - - - - - Publisher
 Aly Brown - - - - - Editor
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 Doug Jorgensen - - - - - Photographer
 Kim Contente - - - - - Sales Director
 Virginia Hoato - - - - - Office Manager
 Penny Werner - - - - - Graphic Designer
 Steve Cleland - - - - - Circulation
 Robert Frank - - - - - Consulting Editor
 Larry Altman - - - - - Reporter
 David Jen - - - - - Reporter
 Dawnmarie Fehr - - - - - Reporter
 Phil Jensen - - - - - Reporter
 Christina Cavallaro - - - - - Reporter
 Matt Schwab - - - - - Reporter
 Laura Ness - - - - - Reporter

PAST STAFF:

Dana McGaugh - - - - - 1st Editor 1963
 Bob Seveal - - - - - Photographer, Reporter,
 Editor, Cartoonist
 David Lowell - - - - - Associate Publisher,
 Sales
 Gale Marshall - - - - - IT Consultant
 Janet Armantrout - - - - - Editor, Reporter, Layout
 Bruce Henderson - - - - - Reporter
 Bill Owens - - - - - Photographer
 Tom Gee - - - - - Artist
 Ron McNicoll - - - - - Reporter
 Pat Lane - - - - - Reporter
 Joan Boer - - - - - Reporter
 Alex Miller - - - - - Reporter
 Richard Yates - - - - - Reporter,
 Associate Editor
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 Sara Owen - - - - - Account Executive

Plus, many others throughout the years!

Newspaper's Values Set by Past Leaders

Dana McGaugh

The Independent's first editor laid the groundwork for the future.

He brought to the editorial desk 19 years of experience as a reporter, editor and publisher. Newspapers produced under his supervision won major California Newspaper Association awards. His coverage of the Santa Clara city government, while serving as assistant publisher of the Santa Clara Journal, earned him an official resolution by the city council, commending him for the most complete and accurate coverage of city affairs that the city had received from a newspaper.

In a 1975 issue of the Valley Times, the reporter quotes Publisher Joan Seppala as saying that it was Dana who ingrained in The Independent staff the journalism principles that the paper followed over the years. Editorial decisions are made based on what benefits the community as a whole. Pressure from advertisers is not factored in.

McGaugh led the paper for approximately three years. He died of a heart attack castigating members of a city commission whom he believed were in the wrong.

Seppala states, "His crusading spirit made a lasting impression on all of us."

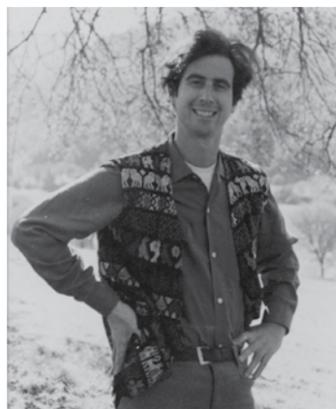


Dana McGaugh

Bob Seveal

Bob Seveal was down at the press in Milpitas all through the night as the first issue of The Independent rolled off the press on September 21, 1963. During his years at the paper, he worked as a photographer, sports writer and news reporter, before taking on the role of editor. Seppala stated, "In person, Bob was soft spoken. Behind his typewriter and then his computer, he was a warrior, passionately fighting for social justice and the environment. When I think of both his compassion and his bold courageous stands, I see him as a great leader. His editorials had a punch, accentuated by the cartoons he drew to accompany them. In his 49 years with the paper, he helped transform the Valley into a better place to live."

Addressing the specifics, Seppala noted that he worked to rally residents around a variety of innovative initiatives aimed at curbing harmful development. They included the 1972 Save All Valley Environment initiative. Seveal also supported initiatives to preserve Pleasanton Ridge starting in 1993, as well as Sunol Ridge. With his support, all the



Bob Seveal

(continued on pg. 42)

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Photojournalist Has an Eye for Both Pictures and News



Doug Jorgensen

On Aug. 18, 1984, a cruising-ordinance debate and a well-publicized National Cruise Night event resulted in a violent confrontation between police and an angry crowd in Livermore.

An estimated 10,000 to 12,000 people in up to 6,000 cars crowded First Street that night, according to a follow-up report on that night's police activities by the city's consultant Alan Kalmanoff. Traffic came to a

standstill. After the volume of cruisers pushed back the first police officers on the scene, the police returned in greater force, recalled Independent photographer Doug Jorgensen, who was in the crowd that night. "They had a massive police presence that retook the downtown. They were not too gentle about what they were doing." In the melee, the police forgot their crowd-control tactics, wrote Kalmanoff. But subsequent police reports to the city placed blame on the cruisers and categorized the event as a cruising problem. Jorgensen disagreed. "I said, no it was not. When somebody's trying to get out of the street and you're hitting them with a baton, that's a police problem ... I had pictures of this; I watched this." Jorgensen recounted his experience to then-Independent Editor Robert Several, and Several agreed to interview Jorgensen and run a story with a description of the events. "I got to hand it to Bob, because he knew the power structure, and all the politics, and we were basically saying that what was going on was not what we were being told," continued Jorgensen. "Bob stood up for what he thought were journalistic values. He completely understood what we were doing." Now a 41-year veteran at the newspaper, Jorgensen also manages payroll, circulation, and the many threads of community knowledge that come only with decades of coverage — threads that continue to weave the histories of the Tri-Valley and The Independent together. "If you think about what the valley would look like had The Independent never existed, it would look vastly different than it does today," he said. "We were one of the organizations that pushed for the redevelopment of downtown Livermore. The ridge over here — Pleasanton Ridge — that would have lux-

ury houses on it rather than a regional park spanning from Sunol to Dublin. There would be a town of 25,000 people north of Livermore, where there's agricultural land right now. There would not be a viable wine industry in the valley. ... The Bankhead Theater would not have been built if not for The Independent and Joan's vision. Some battles we've lost. But some battles we've won and have made a vast difference to the Tri-Valley."

Jorgensen's craft has been a mirror for the community over the decades. "When I am taking a picture, I try to look for artistic elements and those that would interest the reader," he said. "For instance, if I'm photographing a ribbon cutting, I may arrange people in a different order. I might add different elements, like



Independent photographer Doug Jorgensen has been a familiar sight at local events for over 40 years, including parades, sporting events and political gatherings. The photojournalist has been instrumental in offering the public an ongoing view of the community for decades.

props, to make the picture more unique."

Publisher Joan Seppala noted, "The artistry in Doug's photos attracts readers to our pages. In addition, Doug's 41 years of history with The Independent provide him with a knowledge of the Tri-Valley that is invaluable. He remembers the important events that need to be photographed, but he also understands the political issues that have defined the Tri-Valley. As a result, he can give advice to reporters that helps them cover their beats."

BANK OF ITALY (continued from pg. 9)

to Livermore," Zanette continued.

Sterling said the Bay Area Italian American community remember that Giannini wasn't just an amazing businessman, but he was also a good human being with enormous integrity.

"I think as parents we share what good businesspersons hold to be of value: you teach your children that all you have is your character and integrity, so every decision you make has to support your character and speak of your integrity," Sterling added. "And that's what AP Giannini did. That's the role model that he set for everyone who worked for him, and I am sure for the family as well."



Restoration of the Bank of Italy building was undertaken by Lynn and Joan Seppala, and has been the home of The Independent since 1996.



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IN DEFENSE OF OPEN SPACE

By David Jen

The insatiable demand for homes and the resulting urban sprawl in the East Bay came to a head in the late 1990s, when housing developer Shea Homes had plans to build 12,500 new homes — enough for some 30,000 people and 133,000 new vehicle trips daily — in the hills of North Livermore. But the valley’s residents pushed back.

Alameda County Measure D — the Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative — became the culmination of a continuum of growth-control efforts in the Tri-Valley. It began when the area first started to transform toward the end of the

for the West Bay for a long time, but it was accentuated in the late 1990s.”

Lori Souza, Board Chair of the Tri-Valley Conservancy (TVC), said, “Fremont, too, at one time, was a big agricultural area and had been essentially urbanized.”

Measure D passed in November 2000 with a 57% majority of voters countywide, protecting agricultural lands, wildlife and natural habitats from further development. It rejected the Shea Homes development project. The initiative established a county urban growth boundary (UGB) and prevented subdivisions in unincorporated Alameda County that would have allowed agricultural lands to be transformed into housing.

Two years later, the City of Livermore enacted its own North Livermore UGB. Pardee Homes then wrote a ballot initiative to break the City’s UGB. The Livermore voters quashed its North Livermore housing project that fell outside the UGB with a 72% “no” vote.

While urban sprawl develops housing along the cheaper properties on the periphery of a city, requiring longer runs for utilities and longer travel time for residents, infill development builds upon the more expensive parcels between existing developments, keeping residents and businesses closer together, and preserving more land for open-space uses

By establishing a county-wide UGB, voters concerned about unchecked development and the loss of natural habitats limited new housing to inside the boundary

“The open spaces around Livermore define us and contribute to the quality of life for all Livermore residents and for the entire region,” said Mayor John Marchand. “In North Livermore, we are protecting plants that exist nowhere else in the world. Our South Livermore Valley Specific Plan and our wine region are award-winning examples of our success. Managing smart growth and protecting open space is a delicate balance, but Livermore has demonstrated that we can be successful at it.”

Pleasanton Ridge

A presage to Measure D, plans in the 1970s for housing in the ridgeland west of Pleasanton also ignited a small but fierce band of residents in Sunol who opposed the idea.

Carl Nipper, owner of the former Thermal Fruit Company and its ridgeland property, began in 1973 a series of proposals to develop as many as 600 homes along the ridgetop.

A grassroots group, the Sunol Citizens Organized Regarding the Environment (SCORE), fought the idea for the next 10 years, culminating in a 1983 referendum that overturned the county approval of Rancho Sunol, the fifth and final attempt by Nipper to develop the ridge

With SCORE support, the Ridgeland Park Advisory Committee, formed in 1984, proposed a 2,700-acre park. A regional park feasibility study followed in 1986, with a district purchase of most of the Nipper ranch soon after. The Pleas-

anton Ridge Regional Park opened to the public in 1990, to be followed over the decades with more land purchases, reaching today’s 9,000-plus acres of contiguous open space

To further cement development limits, Pleasanton also adopted its own city UGB in 1996, just a few years prior to the county-wide boundary

“At that time, Pleasanton had a very environmentally conscious city council, and they wanted to control their growth because the city had, arguably, covered some of the best farmland in the Tri-Valley, and it was all lost,” said Schneider

Vineyard Protections

Efforts to block development on the Ruby Hill Winery in the 1980s also added checks on development in south Pleasanton, when a grassroots organization called Save Our Vineyards pressured residents to ask, “Do we really want to see agriculture go away?” said TVC board member David Kent

When the area straddling Isabel Avenue between Pleasanton and Livermore was incorporated, a difference in growth mindset between Pleasanton and Livermore developed. Pleasanton was more open to the rapid development that was underway, while Livermore was looking to slow development down. A series of lawsuits was generated between the two cities.

Then, County Supervisor Ed Campbell helped to put together an agreement, which included \$8.5 million in settlement funds. Those settlement funds eventually gave rise to the South Livermore Valley Agricultural Land Trust, the predecessor of present-day TVC, which oversees the South Livermore Valley Area Plan (SL-VAP). Created in 1993, the plan places development limits on agricultural lands in South Livermore for the promotion of viticulture and other agricultural uses

Livermore voters also passed Measure K, just six months before Measure D in March 2000, that established a South Livermore UGB to protect and enhance agricultural lands in South Livermore,

“Assets that support our agri-tourism industry, like the Wine Country Inn and the Wine Country Hotel at the Bankhead, will continue to increase the value of our wine country region,” said Marchand. “The sewer line down Tesla will allow for increased investment for the expansion of viticulture and will create a critical mass that will ensure its long-term viability.”

Schneider noted, “In 2022, Livermore voters did approve Measure P to create a sewer line to protect Livermore’s water quality,

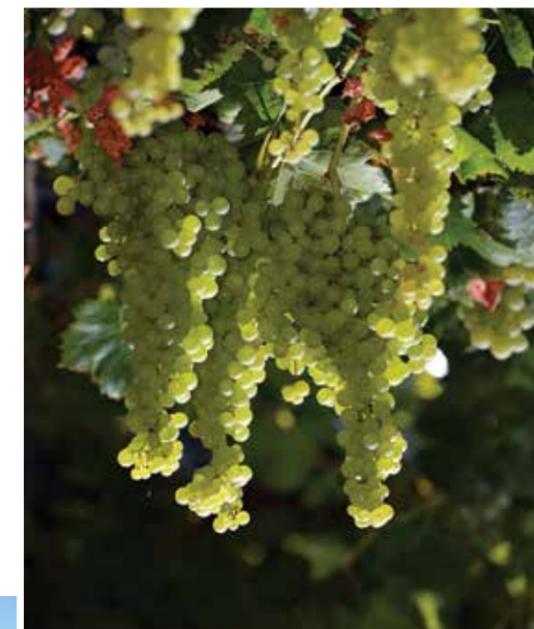
which helps the vineyards. However, the measure did not change the UGB to allow more housing.”

Dublin Urban Limit Line

In November 2000, Dublin voters approved Measure M establishing an urban limit line on the west side of Dublin to prevent sprawl in the west Dublin hills. In 2014, the Dublin City Council unanimously adopted a voter initiative establishing an urban limit line on the east side. Later that year, Dublin voters rejected a measure to

(continued on pg. 20)

BELOW: Grapes ripening on the vine at one of Livermore’s local wineries.



Tesla Park, situated off Tesla Road in Livermore, is named after the historic 19th-century Tesla coal mine in the area, not the car manufacturer.

last century from a rural, agricultural community into a high-tech, business center

Dick Schneider, co-author of Measure D, said, “There was this enormous proliferation of tech jobs in Silicon Valley. But the housing wasn’t keeping up with it. The East Bay had been bedroom communities

Trails along the Pleasanton Ridge offer spectacular views of the Tri-Valley.



(continued from pg. 19)

move the east urban limit line to allow a 2000 unit housing development in Doolan Canyon.

In Retrospect

Twenty years after the passage of Measure D, a review prepared for the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) concluded that the initiative and its subsequent amendments proved to be “highly effective” at directing urbanization within the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore, despite continued population growth of some 70,000 people and 22,300 new housing units since 2000

“No amendments to the UGB have been made and no expansion of existing Spheres of Influence to support urbanization have occurred since the year 2000,” read the report.

LAFCo also described, as a result of the measure, a “continuous greenbelt outside the UGB” including the Pleasanton ridgelines, Doolan and Collier Canyons, Brushy Peak, Bethany Reservoir, Sycamore Grove

Regional Park, Del Valle Regional Park, the Sunol Regional Wilderness, and the South Livermore wine country

Meanwhile, the TVC currently holds 3,882 acres under conservation easement for farming, 643 acres for habitat preservation and 500 acres for parkland

“It’s not just a question of preventing development on the land, but actually having the development rights removed from the land so that it will stay in perpetuity as open space,” said Kent. “Getting close to 4,000 acres of ag land under a conservation easement — that’s a big accomplishment.”

Schneider, however, would write the measure differently, if given the chance to do it again

“What we didn’t anticipate was a big push for industrial scale solar-energy development,” he said. “At the time Measure D was being developed, there were no big plans for sprawling, solar-energy development... Not very long after Measure D passed, because the federal government enacted a bunch of tax credits, there was a big push for large-scale solar.”

The Aramis solar project in North Livermore now plans to build some 100 megawatts of solar-generation capacity on 410 acres of North Livermore — land outside the UGB which has been designated for Large Parcel Agriculture uses. While Aramis has described the power plant as a compatible use, Schneider has identified the project as inconsistent with Measure D, questioning the overlap between power plants and agriculture

Questions of just how to use Bay Area land with solar or open space will therefore continue.

Today, Livermore is facing the county’s recent vote to develop buildings associated with a cemetery outside the UGB and the Livermore Council’s consideration of industrial and commercial developments east of Greenville Road, also outside the UGB.

The Independent will continue to provide news coverage of these issues. In its editorials, The Independent has supported those who have fought for decades to protect our surrounding open space and will continue to do so.

Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve at one time was used almost exclusively as ranch land. Under the East Bay Regional Park District’s multi-use land management policy however, cattle continue to graze in the 6,859-acre wilderness.



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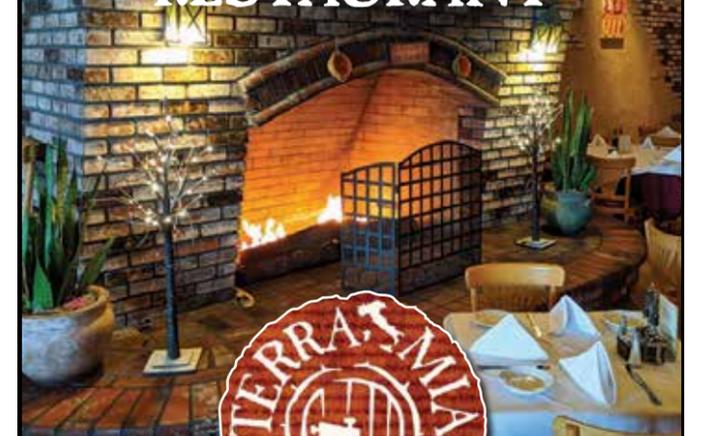
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Tri-Valley Addresses Broad Range of Environmental Issues



Windmills at sunset along the Altamont Pass

By Christina Cavallaro

A fight to preserve the environment has been a central theme in the Tri-Valley over the 60 years of The Independent's news coverage. In addition to the efforts covered in the previous article, the following showcases community accomplishments.

TESLA PARK PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY

Jean King, a Tri-Valley Conservancy board member, noted there has been a fight to preserve Tesla Park and to protect it from becoming an off-road vehicle place in order to save its biodiversity and maintain its ecological merits. After a 20-year fight, state lawmakers prevailed in 2022. A new bill placed \$29.8 million into an off-highway motorized vehicle trust fund for off-road enthusiasts to find a new location so that Tesla could be saved.

ALTAMONT LANDFILL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Waste Management of Alameda County wanted to expand the Altamont Landfill. They were sued by the County of Alameda, the City of Livermore, the City of Pleasanton, Sierra Club, Northern California Recycling Association, and Al-

tamont Landowners Against Rural Mismanagement. As part of the 1999 settlement agreement, a fund was created as a "tipping fee" to mitigate the harm it imposed. That money was put into an Open Space Fund.

Livermore as the host community (closest to the landfill) received 20% of the tipping fees, monies that were used to build the Bankhead Theater.

PROGRESSIVE EFFORTS IN RECYCLING

According to Donna Cabanne, a Livermore resident, an additional 20% of the Altamont Landfill Settlement funds were used to support recycling and waste reduction education. As a result, the Altamont Education Recycling Board was established, which creates impactful work within the schools and the county, establishing recycling programs. "They've done a great job educating students and their parents through PTA and different activities to look at how you reduce plastics that we know are getting into our water, and we are ingesting them," Cabanne noted.

Further, they were very effective in working with Oakland Unified School District, in particular, Nancy Deming, Sustain-

ability Manager for the Oakland Unified School District. "They had a wonderful system that was a model throughout California and beyond." Unfortunately with COVID, the program has not been able to continue at the level that was anticipated, but Cabanne and others are hopeful that it will come back.

The organization was especially effective at getting the Education Advisory Board and Go Green to ban one-time use plastics, particularly, in restaurants. They went so far as to have people bring containers into Starbucks and to different restaurants to collect plastic materials.

Dick Schneider, a local activist, confirmed that the whole county has benefited from the recycling program.

BAN ON FRACKING

Another positive step in the right

direction has been a countywide ban on fracking. Fracking has created problems not just related to oil, but also the terrain below. Cabanne shared that there is even a possible link between fracking and earthquakes.

CRUSADE FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Making a top 10 list is not always something to applaud, especially when it's a top 10 for worst air quality. Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan confirmed that the Tri-Valley did indeed make the list during an address she gave on Climate Change on June 8, 2023. She noted that it was due in part to the geography of the Valley, but also because of the trucks that go from the port to I-5 and right through our communities. In 2020, we had 56 Spare the Air Days, some due to wildfire, but still

considerable.

Bauer-Kahan discussed one main area of focus as clean trucking. "We are investing heavily in clean trucking," she said. "Trucks turn over fast, so forcing new trucks to be clean energy is great."

She went on to say that the port is about to install a hydrogen fueling station, so trucks can fuel up before they head into our valley.

She also noted that scientists are predicting there will be no more water in the Sierra in 24 years. And that, Cabanne noted, "means we are going to be short on water and clean water is going to be an issue. And that means staying vigilant in our efforts to fight the proliferation of microplastics and continue focusing on the ways and measures to call out and reduce the use of the worst offenders."



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Regional Commitment to the Disadvantaged

By Larry Altman

The Independent has a long history of supporting Tri-Valley organizations and city services that aid the region's disadvantaged. Whether it's running public service announcements or writing articles and editorials that focus on their causes, The Independent supports numerous non-profits, including those that assist the unhoused, provide shelter for domestic violence victims, or offer food, medical supplies and health care.

Livermore Mayor John Marchand called the local nonprofit organizations "an integral part of what makes the Tri-Valley such a remarkable place to live."

"The man for whom our community was named, Robert Livermore, was known throughout the region for his kindness and generosity," Marchand said. "I believe that spirit continues to live on in the DNA of our community and it is exemplified by the tremendous work that is done every day by our non-profit organizations."

Here are just a few of the dozens of Tri-Valley organizations and city-run services that serve the region and regularly find themselves in The Independent's news pages:

In late 2022 and early 2023, CityServe of the Tri-Valley collected coats and blankets for those in need, provided hotel rooms for 22 unhoused residents during the winter storms, and delivered 200 gift bags to seniors on Christmas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CityServe dispersed more than \$1 million in

rental assistance to Tri-Valley residents, helped to house 74 unhoused people, distributed 33,000 masks, gloves and PPE items, and managed over 90 people in hotels.

Operated out of the Pleasanton Senior Center, CityServe last year acquired Senior Support of the Tri-Valley to provide greater aid for senior citizens, offering food and shelter assistance, financial counseling and vocational training, legal guidance, and help with medical, dental and behavioral health needs.

In July, Marchand and fellow Mayors Melissa Hernandez of Dublin and Karla Brown of Pleasanton broke ground on Axis Community Health's Second Street Clinic in Livermore.

A Tri-Valley institution for more than 50 years providing health care services to those in need, the new Health Hub will offer dental, behavioral health and medical services. Axis Community Health has locations in all three cities.

Shepherd's Gate in Livermore specializes in offering safe places for women and children suffering from domestic violence, homelessness and addiction. Shepherd's Gate also provides a long-term 12- to 16-month Christ-centered recovery program in every area of the lives of those they help: physical, spiritual, emotional, recovery, parenting, education and career, legal, financial, and family reunification, for instance. The organization also has programs for children.

In April, The Independent covered



the three cities' efforts to help fund Tri-Valley Haven's renovation plan to update its Shiloh House shelter, which has assisted domestic violence victims for decades. A new shelter will house 45 beds instead of the current 30, along with counseling rooms, a recreation room, a garden, and safe indoor and outdoor play areas for children.

Tri-Valley Haven's Sojourner House also provides temporary shelter for homeless families, offering them separate bedrooms, a stocked kitchen, three full bathrooms and laundry facilities. Sojourner House accepts two-parent families, single fathers with children, and families with teenage boys.

In recent years, The Independent followed the successful opening of

(continued on pg. 28)

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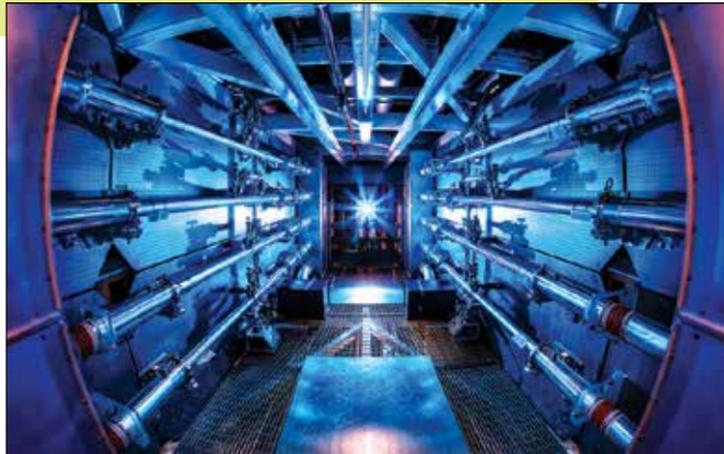
60 YEARS OF SCIENCE IN LIVERMORE

By Jeff Garberson

Science and technology in the Livermore area are dominated by the activities at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the local branch of Sandia National Laboratories.

Both laboratories are funded by the National Nuclear Security Administration in Washington with a primary mission of making sure U.S. nuclear weapons are safe, secure and reliable. In that effort, Sandia is known as an engineering lab that supports the physics design that comes from LLNL. Sandia also does plenty of science, while LLNL is also strong in engineering. Both laboratories work on a very wide range of non-defense projects as well.

Here is a summary of a few select science and technology highlights from 6 decades that have passed since The Independent published its first issue in 1963.



The National Ignition Facility (NIF) Target Chamber at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). On Dec. 5, 2022, researchers at the LLNL's NIF, conducted the first experiment to ever achieve net energy gained from nuclear fusion. The experiment was a historic event for the laboratory and the world. (Photo courtesy of LLNL)

increasingly crowded Europe.

Many disciplines combine to create the features of a modern nuclear weapon, but the heart of much of the effort has always been reliance on calculations made with the most powerful computers available at the time.

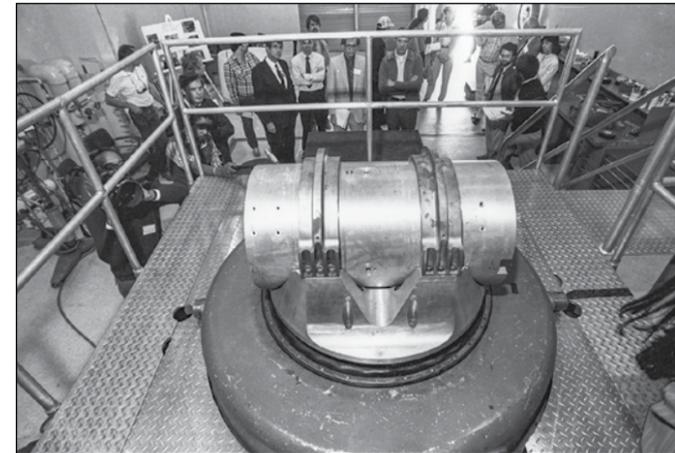
That remains true today, when computers are literally trillions of times faster than in the Laboratory's early days. In the 1950s and '60s, LLNL's constant demand for more powerful computers helped spur the growth of the industry.

Decades later, powerful computers are used in many other industrial and scientific endeavors, from oil prospecting to automotive design and from weather forecasting to climate modeling.

Still, LLNL is at the forefront of computations, with



Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's NIF team has been recognized throughout the world for their groundbreaking, historic achievements. (Photo courtesy of the Rotary Club of Livermore)



Livermore's science and technology laboratories are charged with ensuring U.S. nuclear weapons are secured and safe. (Photo courtesy of LLNL)

Nuclear weapons

By the time the Independent opened, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, with engineering support from Sandia, had already made profound contributions to the nation's nuclear weapons program.

It had shrunk the size and weight of thermonuclear warheads so that they could be carried by missiles small enough to fit on submarines, creating a virtually invulnerable deterrent force during a time of deep concern about the Soviet Union.

In the years that followed, LLNL and Sandia would develop advanced safety features to reduce the chance of radioactive material spreading in the event of an accident.

They would also learn to tailor the energy output of a nuclear explosive that could be used in missile defense in the vacuum of space or to stop a hypothetical tank invasion in an

components of the world's fastest computer, called El Capitan, already being installed, with scientific calculations scheduled to benefit the weapons program next year.

El Capitan is expected to be the first computer capable of operating at a speed of 2 quintillion operations per second – 2 exaflops, in computer parlance.

The Laboratory's main non-defense effort in the early days tried to harness nuclear fusion as an energy source by using magnetic forces to confine a superhot gas of heavy hydrogen in which fusion reactions could occur.

LLNL's scientific approach to the challenge was known as the "magnetic mirror." Although it made important progress, the mirror program was phased out in the 1980s as budgetary limitations led to Washington's decision to support the so-called tokamak approach pursued at Princeton.

Foreign assessments

In the meantime, in a very different area of concern, the nation's need to understand potential threats from other nations led LLNL in 1965 to form an intelligence organization linked to the CIA.

Then called Z Division (now Z Program), the group initially analyzed samples from Russian nuclear tests to help the nation's intelligence community gain insights into Soviet weapons technology.

Over time, its work has expanded to shed light on an expanded range of possible foreign threats in fields ranging from biological agents to data collection to additive manufacturing.

Laser technologies

In the 1970s, LLNL turned to laser

technology to approach two distinct goals: develop more efficient ways to enrich uranium fuel for nuclear power plants, and explore an alternate route to harnessing nuclear fusion.

To improve the economics of supplying fuel for nuclear power, Laboratory researchers developed a laser-based approach to uranium enrichment that was significantly more efficient than the industrial methods then in use.

The success of the technique and the importance of the

(continued on pg. 28)



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SCIENCE
(continued from pg. 27)

nuclear industry led Congress in the 1990s to create a private company, the U.S. Enrichment Corp., to commercialize the technology.

By the end of the decade, however, a worldwide surplus of enriched uranium from a collapsed Soviet Union meant the technology was never needed.

As an alternative approach to harnessing fusion, Lab physicists aimed to use powerful laser beams to squeeze a target capsule filled with fusion fuel to astronomical pressures and temperatures, igniting a miniature thermonuclear explosion.

For LLNL and Washington, learning to generate these small bursts of thermonuclear energy would open up a powerful new way to study nuclear weapons processes in the laboratory without full-scale nuclear testing. (The last U.S. nuclear test was carried out in 1992.)

Independently, energy enthusiasts inside and outside the Laboratory hoped the laser approach might speed the plodding route to fusion energy experienced by magnetic fusion researchers.

But the practical challenge of using laser beams to control and harness fusion turned out to be harder than early calcula-

tions suggested.

Over the next several decades, Laboratory researchers carried out experiments using ever more powerful lasers, learning the fine details of creating miniature fusion explosions from small, fuel-filled capsules.

These improved the ability of defense scientists to study in the laboratory processes that more closely resembled actual bomb explosions.

They achieved a historic success last December, when the world's most energetic laser, LLNL's National Ignition Facility (NIF), ignited a fusion target and caused it to explode with 50% more energy than the target consumed.

December's success was repeated more recently, in late July.

Extensions of these efforts continue today, as researchers plan future experiments aimed at generating still greater energy return.

It's a program designed to help the U.S. make sure its nuclear weapons are safe, secure and reliable, but energy advocates may be excused for hoping that it will also provide clues to finding a shortcut to the long-sought goal of harnessing fusion energy.

DISADVANTAGED
(continued from pg. 25)

Goodness Village, which provides tiny homes at Crosswinds Church in Livermore for 28 Tri-Valley residents who were formally unhoused for at least a year. The Independent has written an editorial in support of their plans for expansion and publicizes fundraising efforts to make Goodness Village possible.

In May, The Independent focused on One Nation Dream Makers' (ONDM) efforts to raise funds to complete its work providing food to help alleviate hunger in Alameda County.

Dublin's Senior Center provides a place for mature residents to spend their days with friends, and take dance and exercise classes. The Center annually displays photos of military veterans for its Wall of Heroes around Veterans Day and hosted a vaccine clinic in 2022.

Marchand and Brown praised the work of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance (TVNPA), which brings organizations together to improve their services.

Each year, the Tri-Valley's mayors speak at a town hall hosted by the TVNPA to emphasize working together to meet the region's needs.

"The Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance is based in Livermore in the CommonPoint Center and over 300 organizations participate along with thousands of volunteers to provide a personal touch," Marchand explained.

Marchand added that the Tri-Valley cities have five shelters for the disadvantaged, the homeless and the abused.

"I am very proud of how our Human Services Department partners with our local nonprofits to accomplish the work that the city cannot," Marchand said. "The cities of the Tri-Valley also work together, sharing grants and resources with regional organizations like Axis Health, CityServe, Open Heart Kitchen and so many others who serve the residents of our entire Tri-Valley."

"I am proud of how the members of our community support the efforts of our nonprofit organizations and how they continue to improve the quality of life for our residents in Livermore and throughout the Tri-Valley."

Brown said that in her role as mayor, she is "pleased to connect many generous residents to seats on nonprofit boards of directors, to positions on human services and housing commissions, or to join me in attending fundraising events in support of our local agencies."

"The sentiments of many within our community is, 'I have been very fortunate in my life, and now it is time for me to give back, but how?'" Brown said. "One thing is for sure — we need more volunteers, new board members and more financial supporters. This is your chance to bring a friend and volunteer together to make twice the difference."



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TRI-VALLEY ARTS — A RETROSPECTIVE

By David Jen

On about 140 nights out of the year, something is going on at the Bankhead Theater in downtown Livermore. Since its grand opening in 2007, its 507 seats have hosted nationally recognized artists, supported regional events and provided space for community groups, inspiring the imaginations and emotions of the Tri-Valley and beyond.

And the new 2023-24 season, which opened with the Brilliance at the Bankhead Gala starring Emmy and Tony Award-winner Jason Alexander on September 9, will not let up either. The season including performances by Paula Cole, Five for Fighting, and The Righteous Brothers, to name a few.

But what were the theater's early days like? The origins of the famed, intimate space trace back to the interests and ambitions of the people who lived here during the transformative second half of the 20th century in the Tri-Valley.

In 1952, the Lawrence Livermore

National Lab opened as a branch of the University of California Radiation Laboratory in response to surprise nuclear-weapons testing by the Soviet Union. Since then, the lab, with accomplishments in fields ranging from material science to computer science to fusion energy, has drawn world-renowned scientists and engineers to live among Livermore's bucolic landscape.

"I really believe a lot of what's here (in the arts) is a result of the Livermore Lab being out here," said Chris Carter, Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center (LVPAC) executive director. "Prior to that, Livermore was kind of a rural town. Then, once you have these highly educated people living in a community, it kind of drives the demand for art and music."

A 1966 article published in The Independent by Books Universal owner James Crockett noted how arts groups were expanding at the time, but needed more support.

"There were people that were perform-



Tri-Valley Repertory Theater's production of "The Little Mermaid"

ing, people that put together an acting group looking for spaces to perform in," said Carter.

In response, community members Tania Selden, Jim Crockett, Joan Kinney (Seppala), Don Miller, and Charles Speake studied the prospect of an arts council, and formed the Livermore Cultural Arts Council. The council's first meeting was held on Oct. 10, 1966.

BELOW: Celebrating Lunar New Year with a performance by the Xiaopei Chinese dance company in front of the Bankhead Theater in Livermore.



The economic boom that began with the lab continued on through the development of the Bishop Ranch and Hacienda Business Park in 1978 and 1982, and the establishment of Silicon Valley as an international high-tech leader in the 1990s. No longer a bedroom community, the Tri-Valley became a vibrant job center that drew people and culture into the area, recalled Livermore vintner Philip Wente.

Livermore per capita income grew some 465% between 1980 and 2010, while nationwide inflation rose only 165%, according to data from the US Census



Modern art sculpture in Livermore's Lizzy Park located at First Street and South Livermore Avenue.

Bureau. Pleasanton incomes grew 509% and Dublin incomes grew 490% in the same period.

"The interest in bringing along the social services was very strong, whether it was better schools, better parks, better transportation," said Wente. "I remember hearing this all the time: I want this to be the best place to live, work and raise a family, anywhere in the world."

With that sort of drive, it was easy to engage people about how to bring amenities, such as performing arts, into the

area, he continued.

Wente recalled the South Livermore Valley Area Plan, adopted in 1993, that aimed to revitalize the area's wine industry and how it inspired people to apply the same revitalization efforts to the downtown as well.

"A lot of like-minded people thought, well, why don't we do a similar kind of plan with the city?" he said.

In 1998, Wente, Seppala, and Phillip Dean formed a nonprofit corporation to develop a performing arts center as part of Livermore's downtown transformation — an organization that would eventually become the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center (LVPAC).

Many groups, such as the Livermore-Amador Symphony and the Livermore Valley Opera, were active at the time and looking for spaces, said Carter.

"Finding a home for a lot of those organizations was kind of the first part of that," he continued.

Seppala noted that it took almost a decade to raise the money needed to fund the whole project.

"County Supervisor Scott Haggerty led the way," she explained. "He found \$20 million to give LVPAC, an amount sufficiently large to build confidence that the project was feasible. Then, over time, community donors stepped forward with their contributions. Nancy Bankhead arranged for her family to become one of the earliest donors of significant size. They were given the naming rights to the theater."

Designed by architect Steve MacCracken and built by Plant Construction, construction on the Bankhead began in October 2005 and was completed in September 2007, with its grand opening the following month.

Firehouse Arts Center

Around that time, the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Foundation also formed with the intent to preserve Pleasanton's historic Fire Station #1 as an arts center.

Construction on the Firehouse Arts Center in downtown Pleasanton began in 2008 and was completed in 2010. Its 227-seat theater, gallery space, classrooms, and grand lobby have provided theater performances, youth classes and art exhibits, among other activities, ever since.

"The Firehouse Arts Center, a beautiful work of art in and of itself, located in the heart of Pleasanton, serves as an inviting beacon, strengthening community image and a sense of place," said Pleasanton Recreation Manager Rachel Prater.

A Community Locked Down

Then, in March 2020, lockdown measures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic shut the Bankhead's doors for 14 months.

"The most difficult day of my professional career was when I had to tell 80% of the staff that they couldn't come back to work for an indefinite amount of time," said Carter. "I felt like we had about three to six months (before funds would run out)."

But the arts center's philanthropic base, which accounts for half of the Bankhead's revenue annually, carried the theater through.

"The beginning of this last year was



Joan Seppala, publisher of The Independent and a primary fundraiser for the Bankhead Theater, attends the 2007 inaugural ribbon cutting event in Livermore.

still tough — last summer and into the fall," said Carter. "And I think we've had some patrons that will never come back. But we're pretty close to where we were

(continued on pg. 41)



DUBLIN

An In-Depth Look at its History

By Dawnmarie Fehr

The City of Dublin has been an incorporated city for four decades, but it was a community long before that, according to former city manager Richard Ambrose.

The small “city at the crossroads” started out in the old west. It was an agricultural village until the 1940s, when the little town boomed as the Navy used the area during World War II. Tons of supplies and hundreds of thousands of sailors were processed through bases located in and around Dublin. Many of the men and women who saw the rolling hills around the Tri-Valley and experienced the mild climate came back after the war to settle permanently.

Working class families from the Bay Area also moved out to Dublin during the 1960s when developers began planning master communities modeled on successful, similar attempts in southern California. Homes were affordable; people began building a community.

Local historian Steve Minniear said, “The developers decided to replicate what they had done in San Diego here, specifically in Dublin, in part because they knew that freeways and roads were going to be upgraded.”

He explained, “They plopped down what they knew was needed at the time, which was lower cost, kind of ‘starter’ houses, and it’s where people could come in the 1960s and get their first house. It was a brand-new community, and it appealed to a lot of people who had lived in places like San Leandro or San Francisco.”

As the homes were built and filled, families began banding together to create traditions and celebrate holidays. Minniear said annual events like the St. Patrick’s Day parade came from the folks who settled in Dublin 60 years ago, eager to build



Sean Diamond Park in Dublin. Located in the Positano subdivision, the park is named for former Dublin resident Army Staff Sergeant Sean Diamond, who was killed in Iraq in 2009.

community.

“The idea of getting together with your neighbors became important,” he said, noting there wasn’t much to do at the time. “Everyone was new, and they all tended to be young families, so they would do stuff together. And what better thing to do than have a parade and heritage events? And that all morphed together to what we have today with this St. Patrick’s Day parade. It’s really the grass roots of making a celebration in your brand-new community.”

In addition to local events, Dublin is known for its parks and other city amenities: city hall, the community center, state-of-the-art school buildings, the Dublin Library and the Dublin Senior Center. These and other amenities were a direct result of Dublin’s rapid growth. The city allowed 17,200 units to be built from 1995 to 2023. Because of this, and the fact the population grew by 58% between 2010 and 2020, the city is the second fastest growing in the Bay Area, second only to Brentwood. Critics said houses went up too fast and growth was

poorly managed. Others insist the growth was necessary to build good facilities, support schools and attract jobs.

“I completely and absolutely reject the characterization of sprawling housing,” said former mayor Tim Sbranti, who feels the city’s growth in housing was well managed. “If anything, we need more housing development ... companies are only going to come to a community where there is a workforce.”

Dublin Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Inge Houston said local businesses championed incorporation from the beginning.

“With no city government, the local business leaders formed the Dublin Chamber of Commerce in 1968 to provide the structure needed for a growing community,” she said. “The Chamber of Commerce grew under the leadership of CEO Nancy Feeley, when the membership represented a service-oriented membership base in the 1980s and ’90s.”

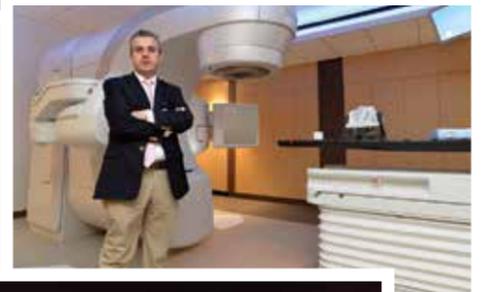
Dubliners made two failed attempts at incorporation, but finally voted for it in 1981. On Feb. 1, 1982, the city became officially incorporated. Initial goals included improving the appearance of the city and lighting. Officials negotiated with the Alameda County Sheriff’s office for police services, discussed how to develop the east side of town, formed a planning commission, and began work to unify the school district. What started as a small town of 15,000 people has now grown to 72,000.

Houston said the chamber’s membership is now more diverse, with companies representing tech, medical, automotive and corporate fields. The chamber also morphed with the times into an information and advocacy-based organization, hosting everything from candidate forums during elections to advances in communication and tech to suit the needs of the Dublin Chamber membership.

“Sixty years ago, Dublin was a sleepy little village, just beginning to evolve from a quiet farming community to a suburban town,” said Mayor Melissa Hernandez. “Over the course of the past 60 years, Dublin has become a thriving community with a flourishing economy; an award-winning school district; vibrant, diverse communities; wonderful events; safe and well-paved roads; and beautiful amenities.”

In 2022, on the occasion of the City’s 40th Anniversary of Incorporation, a video was created to celebrate Dublin’s history. To view, visit www.bit.ly/DUB_movie.

RIGHT, FROM TOP: Families participate in parachute games at the public celebration of Dublin’s Sean Diamond Park in 2018. Kaiser Permanente’s radiological facility opened in 2019. “Splatter” performs at one of the city’s various public events. Former Dublin City Councilmember Sean Kumagai stands in front of city hall for the raising of the Gay Pride flag. The Sheriff’s honor guard attends the opening of the new police facility in 2020.



Issues Championed by The Independent

By Robert Frank

Robert Frank served as interim editor for *The Independent* for eight months after editor Janet Armantrout died in August 2019. She served *The Independent* for 55 years. After a new editor was hired, Frank returned to the consulting editor role that he has held for five years.



Tom Gee, *The Independent's* artist, created a drawing of the newspaper's first home in 1963 on the second floor of the Schenone building shown above on First Street near the flagpole. In 1996, the paper moved to The Bank of Italy at the northeast corner of First Street and Livermore Avenue, where it remains today.

It's both amazing and rare in 2023 for a community's newspaper to still have its founder and owner reliably publishing local news after 60 years.

Today, most of the newspapers in the greater Bay Area are owned by the same Manhattan hedge fund, whose top concern is wringing every little drop of profit from increasingly homogenized news products. Detached owners aren't likely to be very concerned, for very long, about communities they've never seen.

Joan Seppala arrived in Livermore in 1962 and found a small agricultural town with a major highway ripping right through the heart of downtown. Dublin was a county enclave and Pleasanton's

biggest industry was digging gravel. Yet the population was booming — the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was crucial to national security at the height of the Cold War.

The Tri-Valley, Seppala thought, could use a solid local newspaper to help understand this rapid growth and the changes that were to come, while preserving its unique charm and character. So, Seppala — a 24-year-old crusader in what was considered a man's profession — found financial backers and started *The Independent*.

Since 1963, *The Independent* has vigorously championed causes close to the heart of the community — from protection of open spaces to the enhancement of local education, arts and sciences. The paper's mission also calls for an unyielding support of the disadvantaged and a fierce challenge to public figures who misuse power.

The Tri-Valley would look very different without *The Independent*, which over the years has been instrumental in preserving the area's ranchlands and vineyards from development and in establishing Livermore's Bankhead Theater, a cultural arts center.

Here are just a few of the issues championed by *The Independent* over the years:

1970-72 — Long before California started charging developers impact fees, Livermore's SAVE initiative limited development unless adequate services, such as new schools, were already in place. Because of the city's 10% growth rate, schools were in double-session and the city's budget was overwhelmed. The initiative was challenged all the way to the California Supreme Court, where it was upheld. Throughout it all, *The Independent* was boycotted by local inter-

ests who organized to put the paper out of business by pulling advertising. The three-day-a-week paper was forced to become a weekly. But in the end, more schools were built to handle the growing need without overcrowding.

1981 — Started the Harvest Wine Celebration to support local wineries and promote them to a larger audience.

1980-1981 — Supported the incorporation of Dublin, which resulted in voters deciding to become their own city. Until then, Dublin was controlled by the county and residents had little say in its development.

1983 — Campaigned to stop development on Pleasanton Ridge. Editor Bob Several was intimately involved with the Sunol campaign, which he supported with stories and editorials. Today, a regional park and Pleasanton city park span the ridge from Sunol to Dublin.

1990s — Supported the redevelopment of downtown Pleasanton, which by the mid-1980s had become rundown.

1993 — Supported the South Livermore Valley Area Plan, codified into law vineyard agriculture and backed the creation of conservation easements to preserve and increase Livermore's wine grape growing acreage. At the time, there were fewer than 20 wineries in the area; there now are more than 40.

2000 — Crusaded for Alameda County's Measure D, the Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative, that establishes a county urban growth boundary, restricting the amount of development allowed north of Livermore in county unincorporated agricultural lands.

(continued on pg. 46)

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LYNN SEPPALA

Behind the Scenes Supporter of The Independent

Lynn Seppala, Independent publisher Joan Seppala's husband, serves on the board of directors of Inland Valley Publishing, the company that owns The Independent. He has played a big role in the history of the paper.



Lynn Seppala

Joan recalls that when The Independent was boycotted for its support of the SAVE Initiative in 1972, Lynn helped keep the paper afloat. An acronym for Save All Valley Environments, the SAVE Initiative was supported by Livermore residents to address its 23% annual growth rate that placed schools on double sessions and negatively impacted the city's finances, straining water and sewer services.

Joan said, "Lynn Seppala, who had a modest starting salary at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), loaned us his paycheck at the beginning of each month. However, we had to return it at the end of the month so that he could pay his bills. Some say that I married Lynn for his money!"

Joking aside, Joan says that Lynn has always been there when needed, whether it was to provide moral support, funds

or help to solve a problem. When Janet Armantrout died, The Independent's editor for 31 years, Lynn helped to edit the paper until her replacement was found. Lynn was also the lead manager of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades to the historic Bank of Italy building on the northeast corner of First Street and Livermore Avenue, enabling it to serve as The Independent's home.

Lynn is an active member of the community and a well-known scientist.

He has been a longtime supporter of local cultural, educational and environmental organizations, playing many leadership roles. He serves on the boards of the Del Valle Fine Arts, Rae Dorrough Speakers Series and the Livermore-Amador Symphony. For the Symphony, he has also been chosen to work as its treasurer. Previously, Lynn was selected as the chair of the local Pacific Chamber Orchestra board. He has been elected to the Livermore Cultural Arts Commission board, a former chair, and continues to manage its Tuesday Tunes performances in front of the Bankhead Theater during the summer. Lynn is a founding member of the Las Positas College Foundation, formerly its chair, and currently works as chair of the Las Positas College Oversight Committee. He also sits on the UC Merced Foundation Committee. He was elected to the Tri-Valley Sierra Club, and then appointed as its chair.

In a story written about him at LLNL, Lynn was quoted as saying, "You need the arts for the spirit of the community. Having vibrant cultural arts helps bring jobs to the Livermore area. People want good schools, amenities, a clean environment and something to do culturally."

From the start, he helped support the construction of the Bankhead Theater, noting that the opening of the Bankhead Theater in Livermore has been a boon

for the cultural arts in the Tri-Valley, especially music organizations that now have a venue in which to perform.

Lynn has also made his mark as a scientist.

After earning a doctorate in optics at the University of Rochester in New York, he spent most of his career at the LLNL in Livermore. He retired in 2013 after 37 years. At the time of his retirement, he had most recently served as the chief optical designer for the laser fusion program.

"Dr. Seppala is considered one of the world's top experts in optical design," said Edward Moses, former principal associate director at LLNL. "Throughout his career, Lynn has tackled the most technically challenging optical problems and produced real and effective solutions to issues of national and international importance."

Those challenges have included designs for a linear accelerator that will advance studies in precision physics and the first-ever, in-laboratory thermonuclear ignition last December and this July that could lead to an unlimited source of energy. In addition, he led the optical design of the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) now being built in Chile.

Lynn's achievements are all the more impressive due to his personal struggles with a stroke at age 46 that paralyzed his right side and seriously affected his speech and cognitive abilities.

He overcame or compensated for the losses. He learned to become left-handed, walk again and ski expert runs despite his remaining disabilities. Regaining speech and cognitive abilities, he retained his position as chief optical designer, performing at even higher levels.

More recently, he helped lead the capital campaign that created a Certified Stroke Center at Stanford Health Care – Tri-Valley, a center that has saved lives.



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Dublin Unified School District

The 13,000 students at Dublin Unified School District are served by 14 schools, encompassing all grades from transitional kindergarten through high school. The district's oldest operating school – Murray Elementary – was founded in 1966, and its newest – Emerald High School – is slated to open in January 2024.

Superintendent Chris Funk joined the district in 2021 and led it out of the strict closures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He works closely with his staff and teachers to support the district's mission of creating lifelong learners through safe environments fostering collective responsibility. The district collaborates with community stakeholders to reach this goal.

"Local media outlets serve as a bridge between the Dublin Unified School District and its community - not just Dublin, but the entire Tri-Valley," Funk said. "These resources help to illuminate our achievements, build awareness of our initiatives, foster stakeholder engagement, and nurture a sense of transparency."

For more information, call 925-828-2551 or visit www.dublin.k12.ca.us.

Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) operates 19 schools, including two comprehensive high schools and an adult education program. Led by Superintendent

Chris Van Schaack since 2022, the district's stated mission is to ensure each of its students graduates with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world.

"The Independent has consistently prioritized coverage of our schools, our students, and district initiatives," he said. "We are appreciative of their commitment to connecting our community to public education, especially for those who do not have direct ties to our district as parents, staff members, or elected board members."

For more information on LVJUSD, call 925-606-3200 or visit www.livermoreschools.org.

Pleasanton Unified School District

Pleasanton's school district is home to 15 schools offering top-of-the line public education to its residents for all grades, as well as a virtual academy serving students online. Established in 1988, the district's staff and students are led by Superintendent David Haglund, who shepherded his team through the COVID-19 pandemic. Its mission is to grow resourceful, resilient, responsible students who will make a better world.

The district is deeply embedded in the community,

For more information, call 925-462-5500 or visit www.pleasantonusd.net.

Sunol Glen Unified School District

The small, one-school district of Sunol Glen offers a special experience difficult to get in larger districts. Their school, on the brink of its 100-year anniversary, gives local students a

(continued on pg. 41)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The new gymnasium at Livermore High School was completed in June 2022. Seniors at Foothill High School in Pleasanton celebrate during graduation ceremonies. Las Positas Community College in Livermore was recently named the #1 community college in the state and #6 in the nation.




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My Recollections, Reflections and Regrets

By Barry Schrader

When asked to write a piece in commemoration of The Independent's 50th anniversary, I was both flattered and dismayed. It is great to be offered space in this special issue, but how could it be that I am old enough to remember back a half century. Other than John Oliver and Fred Dickey, I seem to be the oldest living competing newspaperman left.

I would have titled this piece "Joan the Giant Slayer" or "David Versus Goliath – and She Won." Her detractors, and I used to be one of them, will likely have less flattering thoughts about their least favorite fish wrapper.

It was 1967 when I first arrived in Livermore to take the editor's job with Floyd Spark's Herald & News, a morning daily that he said had little competition except for a "left-wing weekly put out by a Berkeley hippie woman." Floyd didn't seem too worried about losing any advertising since he was a right-wing Republican, as were most of the businessmen and professionals in Livermore at that time. He also didn't think the Rad Lab counted much, because they were all egg heads and far-out scientists, not interested in local issues.

I soon learned that The Independent, even though only issued weekly (plus Fridays and Sundays for a while), could scoop us with their experienced staff steeped in local issues, and using news contacts who would not deal with the conservative Herald. It became a focus of our paper every campaign, and during humungous growth versus no-growth battles, to attack The Independent's liberal stands and "radical no-growth candidates."

After two years, I departed Livermore for a job offer back at my roots in northern Illinois. After four years away, I accepted an enticing offer to be editor of a new morning daily entering the 'news-

This article was picked up from The Independent's 50th anniversary magazine and reprinted with permission from Barry Schrader a few weeks before he died in 2020.

paper wars" in the Livermore-Amador Valley (before the name "Tri-Valley" was thought of). The Valley Times was published by a longtime enemy of Floyd named Dean Leshner. They previously

but nearly committed suicide economically when all the realtors, auto dealers and most retail advertisers pulled their ads from the paper over its stand. The Independent dropped back to a week-



In a moment of levity, the three newspaper editors posed for a charity event promotion around 1974, acting out their competitive spirit in a staged pugilistic bout. From left: Al Fisher of The Pleasanton Valley Times, Barry Schrader of The Herald, and Bob Several of The Independent. (archival photo)

had a gentleman's agreement that Floyd stayed in Alameda County and Dean ruled the newspaper world in Contra Costa County. Then Floyd had bought the Village Pioneer and that started a turf war that only ended when the two men either sold their empires or died. Floyd died first. Soon though, I decided Floyd was a better boss and returned to the (now named) Tri-Valley Herald from 1972-1980.

In the 1971-72 growth battle, The Independent and its guru Don Miller had decided a ballot measure to slow growth was the weapon they needed to "stop the sprawling development from paving over the valley." It was called the SAVE Initiative (Save All Valley Environments) and caused the greatest political storm the valley had ever seen. The Independent's side won that particular battle,

ly. Joan must have had to subsidize the paper for several years after that. (I was never privy to her balance sheet though.)

Meanwhile, on the editorial side, I got in trouble sparring with Bob Several and his staff. I would run a column from time to time name-calling or admonishing The Independent. Bob retaliated, even firing off a letter to the editor, which I printed. My boss at the time, Dean, thought it ill-advised to give any space or even mention the paper, so he admonished me soundly. Then when I returned to the Herald, Floyd also ordered me to ignore them in print.

The only time I ever pulled a real coup on The Independent is when I hired their token conservative writer Walt Hecox away for better wages and better pay for his column. Walt expressed regret for leaving Joan whom he said was "like a

daughter" to less harassment from the "left-leaning young whipper-snappers" at the paper who delighted in making fun of his viewpoint. But that is another story all in itself.

After I left the newspaper wars in 1980, I came to respect the writing skills and well-backgrounded reporting by The Independent's staff. They would call me at Sandia for comment and often ran my news releases without cutting or changing words. I even started dropping by their office, first upstairs over the 1079 Club, then later in the old Bank of America edifice. Bob Several and I got better acquainted and had lunch together over at Dean's Café in P-town a couple of times. We would reminisce about the good old days of heated competition and how we skewered each other in columns.

Now as I look back on it, decades and thousands of miles ago, it was the best time of my career, facing head-to-head competition with the Indy and the Times.

Joan had started her dream on a shoestring and now 50 years later is still around to bask in the glory of having used her editorial slingshot (and clever savvy in other areas) to slay both giants – Floyd and Dean, today maintaining a clear lead over the struggling merged products that still come out daily, but have far less influence and local news than her paper.

So, congratulations to Joan, Janet, Ron, Doug and my good friend David Lowell, for their dedication, perseverance, and success after 50 years of fighting the good fight. I regret not being there today to make a toast to all the great people, past and present, who populated the Indy.

ARTS (continued from pg. 31)

pre-pandemic. And so I'm hopeful that we're kind of past that at this point."

Wente and Seppala, who both sit on the LVPAC Board, and Carter look forward to attracting audiences beyond the Tri-Valley through partnerships they have been building with other venues, such as Firehouse Arts, the Grand Theatre in Tra-

cy, and Las Positas College. "You know, I said earlier, we're active about 140 days a year; I'd like that to be 365 days a year," said Carter. "There are not many communities (our size) that can boast a venue like this in their downtown. ... I hope people continue to discover it and come out and enjoy it as much as possible."

SCHOOLS (continued from pg. 38)

top-notch education through 8th grade. Sunol grads move onto high school in Pleasanton, but retain fond memories of their tight-knit community back home. Superintendent Molleen Barnes fills the role of school principal as well, and knows her district – and its challenges – well.

"Although we are so close to Silicon Valley and in the Bay Area, our school is a hidden gem, as it is in an incredible bucolic setting that makes you feel that you are quite a ways from the hustle and bustle of towns and cities," she said.

Despite a movement in 1987 to have the school absorbed by Pleasanton's school district, local residents have worked to keep their school independent and unique, and view it as the heart of the town. It is home to local club meetings and local theater, often serving as a central gathering place. Because of the town's small size, only about 20% of students are local residents. Others come from Bay Area cities, including Union City, Newark and Milpitas.

"It is such a joy and privilege to be a part of this community and support our beloved treasure, our children, as they journey through their educational experience," said Barnes.

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Las Positas College

Nestled in the foothills of Mt. Diablo in the northern portion of the City of Livermore, Las Positas College (LPC) is home to nearly 8,000 enrolled students. It began in 1963 as an extension of Chabot College, and by 1988, was designated an independent college. It received full accreditation

in 1991 from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and has been growing its campus and student body since then.

Recently ranked #1 among community colleges in the state and #6 in the nation, the school offers curriculum for students seeking career preparation, transfer to a four-year college or university, or personal enrichment. The campus offers university transfer classes, retraining classes for those in need of employment or career advancement, a first-time educational opportunity for many adults, enrichment classes for those seeking a broader perspective, and career and technical training for those entering the technical and paraprofessional work force. LPC President Dr. Dyrell Foster said the school's top ranking puts a spotlight on its excellent academic programs.

"Our faculty, classified professionals, and administrators strive for excellence, equity, and success in all that we do," he said. "We are happy to be an excellent resource to our students, their families, and the Tri-Valley community as we support students in achieving their educational goals and career aspirations."

Foster said he recognizes the importance of local communication channels. "As the President of Las Positas College, I recognize the invaluable contribution of The Independent news in highlighting the achievements, stories, and aspirations of our students, faculty, and the Livermore community at large, enriching the tapestry of our local landscape," he said.

For more information, call 925-424-1000 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu.

Past Leaders

(continued from pg. 14)

developments proposed for sensitive lands were blocked.

Several expressed moral indignation about trends in society that he believed were discriminatory. He argued in favor of fair housing legislation in Livermore, so that affordable housing could be provided for all. He favored outreach to those who might not be noticed, such as the homeless, farm workers and those with disabilities.

Associate Publisher David Lowell noted, “Bob’s talents, his articulate journalistic ability and his courage were vital in helping establish The Independent’s position in the community – in the political environment and in the hearts of residents of the Tri-Valley.”

Lowell said he remembered the two of them having a quiet talk in their office before the first issue was published. Several said, “I love it here.” Lowell explained, “Bob meant the communities and what they represented, and he meant The Independent. His stories and editorial, and his role as editor encouraged the citizens and their governments to act in the best interests of the communities. Nothing altered his focus on what he saw as the best for the Tri-Valley.”

Several wrote a story for the Independent’s 15th anniversary, focusing on the launching of The Independent. He explained, “(Dana McGaugh) roused me out of my cynicism ... Virtually every other paper I had observed seemed to be cut from the same cloth: fat, safe, commercial ventures, rather than real newspapers willing to go all out for truth and justice... Something leapt to me out the vortex of it all and I knew here was the newspaper where I wanted to be the newspaperman. ... The Independent aimed to be a ‘newspaper.’ Joan Kinney, the publisher, and David Lowell, the business manager, intended to make it so, as well as McGaugh. That birth edition radiated with something human and fervent.”

He continued, “People in the community responded instantly to it. Not everyone, of course, but enough to make us know we had a place in the Valley and a purpose to fulfill.”

Gale Marshall

Gale Marshall helped launch The Independent. Though living on a moderate salary from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, he took the risk of investing \$5000 in The Independent, the first area resident to do so.



Gale Marshall

During the year when the paper was in its formative stages, he advised in every area, even helping all night at the press as the first issue emerged, along with Bob Several and Joan Seppala.

An advanced programmer at the lab, he wrote programs for programmers. He was a pioneer in the field, known in particular for writing assemblers, programs close to machine language.

He introduced The Independent to electronic typesetting machines before other area newspapers took advantage of the new technology. Fascinated by a variety of issues, he wrote software for the circulation, sales and business departments. He worked over weekends and sometimes into the night to keep all the equipment running so that the newspaper could make its deadlines. Sales Manager David Lowell said of him, “Gale was a wonderful person with whom to share a career. In all ways, Gale has helped create a rock solid foundation for our newspaper.”

David Lowell

David Lowell brought his MBA and professional training to The Independent in his role as manager of advertising sales. However, he was not your usual businessman. His courage and business acumen carried The Independent through a boycott of the paper.



David Lowell

In 1971, before the boycott, Lowell had landed virtually every major grocery, drug and home improvement advertiser in the area -- lucrative ads that he snatched from The Independent’s competitors.

A year later, the paper was attacked for its news coverage and editorial support of community leaders who wanted to prevent sprawl development. Citizens filed an initiative that would limit growth to what the environment, school facilities and city government could handle. The air was polluted, schools were on double sessions and the 10% growth rate was fiscally unsustainable for Livermore and Pleasanton city governments.

Residents passed the initiative handily with a 66% vote. However, it was David Lowell, not the rest of the newspaper team, who was out in front engaged in hand-to-hand combat fighting for advertisers and the paper’s survival. Because he had a family, the personal risk and sacrifice for him was enormous. Most of The Independent staff were still single.

The Independent was reduced from 68 pages a week on three days down to six pages on one day. With Lowell’s leadership in the business community, the paper gradually built back to a sustainable level. Surveys showed that a high percentage of voters trusted The Independent.

Lowell said, “As the first chairman of the Livermore Valley Young Republicans (1965) and later, vice-chairman of the Alameda County Young Republicans, I brought a conservative view to the management of The Independent. From a political perspective, I found the local issues did not align with political parties, but purely what was in the best interest of the citizens in the communities.”

He continued, “For example, zoning issues are not Democrat

(continued on pg. 44)

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Past Leaders

(continued from pg. 42)

or Republican issues. Limiting growth so schools are not on double sessions was supported by people of both political persuasions. Saving the vineyards was not a Democratic or Republican issue. Locating Urban Growth Boundaries to preserve the urban center of the community was not a Democrat or Republican issue. In the successful referendums that supported these positions, people from both political parties heavily favored them.”

He concluded, “To spend one’s career with a totally ethical community newspaper, working for the good of all members of the community, is the most I could ever have asked of life. The Independent has played a key role in helping this Valley become what it is today. The path has been extremely challenging and The Independent itself has paid a major price to help this progress.

“We feel even those who opposed us over the years might now appreciate what our Valley has become, and hopefully our role in it”

Bill Owens

On December 9, 1969, Independent photographer Bill Owens shot a picture of the Rolling Stones concert at the Altamont Speedway, shown below. Owens writes, “By noon, the crowd grew to over 300,000. Soon, people were trying to climb on the stage.



Bill Owens

The Hells Angels were acting as security for the concert, and using pool cue sticks to beat people back off the stage. The images I took of the concert were seen around the world.”

Describing his 14 years at The Independent, Owens explains, “The job gave me the opportunity to grow as a photographer and produce the book *Suburbia*. I later received a Guggenheim and published three more monographs. See www.billowens.com.”



Owens’ photo taken during the Rolling Stone’s concert at Altamont Speedway in 1969. (Photo courtesy of Bill Owens)

Janet Armantrout

In 1964, Janet Armantrout started work at The Independent laying out the paper. Later, she was asked to cover stories as well, and in 1988, was promoted to editor, where she served until she died in 2019. She once told Publisher Joan Seppala that people care about The Independent because The Independent cares about them.



Janet Armantrout

Armantrout showed her caring in many ways. She was responsive to those who came in with important news stories, as well as those with smaller ones. Her editorials supported not only the good works and good ideas of community agencies and institutions, but also those of individuals who deserved recognition.

On one occasion, Seppala questioned whether abandoned dogs, cats and rabbits should have their pictures and captioned story appear on the front page every week. Armantrout pointed out that the Pet of the Week notice with its invitation to adopt an animal in need was the best read article in the paper. Thinking more about it, Seppala came to realize the stories were emblematic of the caring Armantrout brought to all in the community. They express the paper’s deepest values, its underlying strength.

One of Armantrout’s trademarks was her objectivity and fairness. Armantrout was known for listening to all sides and giving a balanced point of view. She helped Seppala keep the paper objective. Seppala is involved in many issues on a grass roots level. She counted on Armantrout to tell her, “No,” when Seppala came in with too many stories on the same issue.

Associate Publisher David Lowell noted the completeness of The Independent’s coverage under Armantrout. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the area after living and working in the Valley for 55 years gave depth to her coverage. In addition, she was meticulously accurate in reporting the facts.

Seppala summed up Armantrout’s history at the paper. “Janet’s gentle manner belies a moral and intellectual power that still guides The Independent.”

Ron McNicoll

Ron started his career as a reporter with The Independent in the mid-1960s. He later went to work for the Alameda Sun and the Contra Costa Times before returning to The Independent in 1996 to report on local and county agencies, school districts and city government. During his time covering the Zone 7 Water Agency, he dug into important water resource issues. He had a strong ability to investigate state water policy to gain a thorough understanding of how legislation would impact the Tri-Valley.

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INDEPENDENT ROOTS
(continued from pg. 12)

The paper's editorial endorsements backed the residentialist party, which eventually gained a majority on the Livermore City Council, and one person on the Pleasanton City Council.

Also at the grassroots level, there was serious and persistent reporting on social issues. For instance, discrimination against minority youths at the Camp Parks Jobs Corps in the late 1960s. The Livermore community's creation of a group to deal with that discrimination was covered extensively.

On the financial side, the publisher gave free advertising space to the local office of the War on Poverty for its client job listings and other needs.

Editor Bob Several addressed the social equity issue personally. He developed a good rapport with people in the

Hispanic community. The paper promoted its Folklorio group and its other endeavors.

The Independent led a legal tussle between the Pleasanton Housing Authority and War on Poverty attorney Dan Price, who insisted that legally the Komandorski Village housing near Camp Parks could be opened to civilians, not just soldiers.

The Independent's coverage of the issue led to the Pleasanton City Council replacing personnel on the housing authority board to clear the way for a more cooperative attitude to house low-income civilians, as well as the military.

The Independent's grassroots approach was even seen in the way reporters made a crucial decision about

layoffs. The Independent lost the majority of its advertising in 1973 because of a boycott triggered by the newspaper's support of the SAVE (Save All Valley Environments) initiative.

As a result, The Independent had to reduce 40% of its editorial expenses. Most newspaper publishers simply would have told their editors to lay off 40% of the staff, which in The Independent's case would have been two of the five reporters. But Seppala gave the power over the decision to the reporters themselves. After a long discussion, they all signed on to retaining a full staff and taking a pay cut. Reporters did not want to weaken the paper by reducing its coverage. It was also a show of support for each other; they wanted no one to be left without a paycheck.

ROBERT FRANK
(continued from pg. 34)

2002 — Campaigned for the North Livermore Urban Growth Boundary Initiative, which was adopted after more than 10,000 signatures were collected.

2005-06 — Fought Pardee Homes' attempt to break the North Livermore UBG by building a town of 2,450 units and 25,000 people, under county control, in Las Positas Valley. Livermore voters defeated the proposal.

2004-2007 — Seppala served on a committee to revitalize and redevelop downtown Livermore. One of the major obstacles was State Highway 84 cutting through downtown Livermore on First Street. The Independent campaigned to move the highway off of First Street.

2007 — The Bankhead Theater, with a downtown plaza and park, was built, marking the culmination of 44 years of Seppala and the Independent's local support for the arts and a people-friendly downtown.

The importance of having a media voice that is embedded in and genuinely cares for the community cannot be overlooked. Publisher S.I. Newhouse, of the Staten Island Advance, got the Staten Island Bridge built. Santa Barbara News Press founder Thomas Moore Storke championed the city's Mediterranean motif, the building of Lake Cachuma reservoir and UCSB. And he exposed the character assassinations and other chicanery of the John Birch Society.

And recently, we saw in a small community in Kansas how a local paper's news gathering triggered collusion between police and a local businesswoman. She was so threatened by information that the paper had collected — and had already decided against publishing — that an unconstitutional raid on the newspaper's office was conducted by the town's entire police force. Stress from the raid led to the death of the Marion County Record's 98-year-old owner, Joan Meyer.

Following the raid, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is-

sued a statement condemning the action on Aug. 13. It was co-signed by more than 30 news organizations and allied groups, including the Associated Press, Bloomberg, Gannett, New York Times, NBC, The New Yorker, Reuters and the Washington Post.

Alden Capital's Digital First Media did not sign — despite being the second-largest owner of newspapers in the nation, including most that remain in the greater Bay Area.

Seppala, now 84, continues her commitment to help guide the Tri-Valley into a future that respects and upholds its community values. In an age where local news often falls victim to profit-driven motives, Seppala and The Independent stand as exemplars of what journalism, at its core, aims to be — a voice for the people, a watchdog for democracy, and a force for positive change. The Independent is a living testament to the vital role that committed journalism plays in shaping, safeguarding, and celebrating a community.

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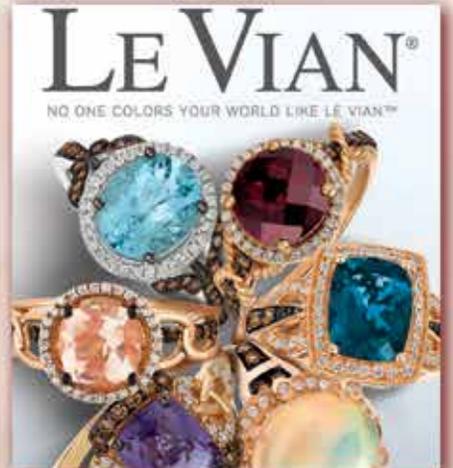
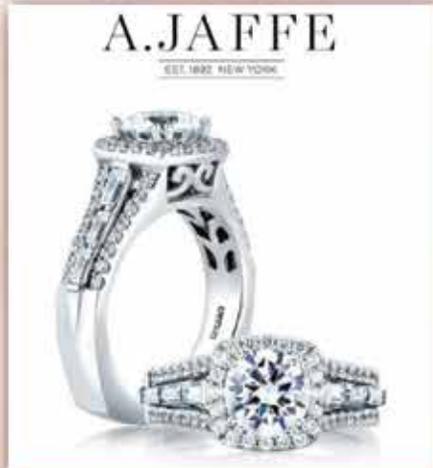
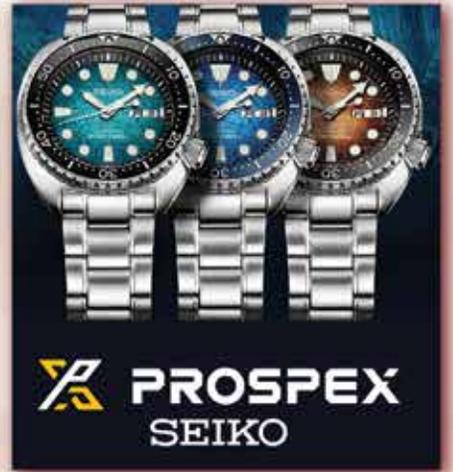
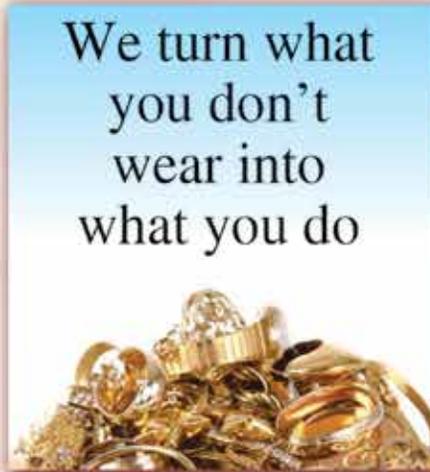
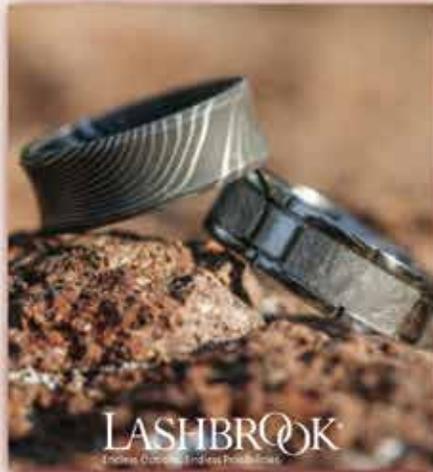
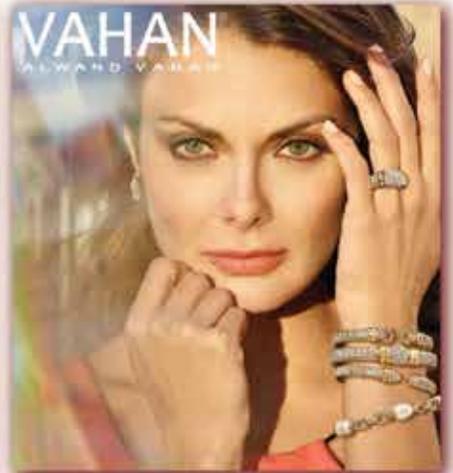
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THE INDEPENDENT'S ROOTS RUN DEEP

For the past 60 years, The Independent has covered the environment, social issues and arts and science from the grassroots level, not from the top, looking down.

A social issue of the 1960s led to the creation of the newspaper. Fresh from receiving her MA degree from the University of Chicago, Joan Seppala, who before her marriage to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) scientist Lynn Seppala, was Joan Kinney, tried to obtain a news reporting job in the Bay Area. All she was offered were “society news” jobs, the standard slot for women journalists in those days.

An editor of the San Francisco Chronicle waved his arms across the newsroom filled with 100 or so reporters, and told her, “See, they are all men.”

Undaunted, Seppala found a job with the Livermore Pioneer, a newly formed branch of the Danville Pioneer. The paper folded in a few weeks.

Seppala could see that there was an energetic, diverse community in Livermore and throughout the Valley, with farmers, ranchers, LLNL scientists, and actors. With the help of four newly found Bay Area investors – Nick Cox, Miller Ream, Paul Denison and David Knott – she launched The Independent. The first issue was dated Sept. 22, 1963.

The next 60 years proved to be quite a journey for the publisher, the staff and the community.

Founded by a woman who had to create her own journalism career and was interested in the political issues of the day, The Independent saw to it that residents could voice their concerns regarding rapid, unfettered development. Spokespersons were quoted in leading stories, which caused many residents to



The Independent staff in the early years is shown above with publisher Joan Seppala front row center, Dana McGaugh to her left, David Lowell on her right, Bob Seval and Janet Armatrout behind her.

unite to form a citizen-led group that sought to slow down the mushrooming growth in the valley.

Longtime Independent editor Bob Seval, who died in 2012, once succinctly summed up the growth battles in the valley. There were two political parties, he said. One was comprised of those who wanted to continue the accepted development patterns common in the region. The other was the residentialist party, which wanted to see the people who live here control the planning for their cities.

The Independent's reporting ensured that the various aspects of the growth issue were told thoroughly. The impacts of the rapid growth included double sessions in schools, strain on water and sewer utilities and heavy air pollution. One year, there were more than 100 clean-air violation days in the valley.

The foul air prompted a Livermore resident to call a press conference during which he wore a gas mask. A Pleasanton resident showed up at a city council meeting, also wearing a gas mask. He too made a speech about air pollution.



Joan Seppala, left, with longtime Independent editor Janet Armatrout.



Pictured at the new offices of The Independent in the historic Bank of Italy are (from left) Lynn Seppala, Joan Seppala, David Lowell, Robert Seval and Gale Marshall.

(continued on pg. 46)

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INDEPENDENT STAFF

It takes a village to put The Independent out each week, and over the years we have had many talented and dedicated staff come through our doors.

CURRENT STAFF:

Joan Seppala - - - - - Publisher
 Aly Brown - - - - - Editor
 Ruth Roberts - - - - - Associate Editor
 Doug Jorgensen - - - - - Photographer
 Kim Contente - - - - - Sales Director
 Virginia Hoato - - - - - Office Manager
 Penny Werner - - - - - Graphic Designer
 Steve Cleland - - - - - Circulation
 Robert Frank - - - - - Consulting Editor
 Larry Altman - - - - - Reporter
 David Jen - - - - - Reporter
 Dawnmarie Fehr - - - - - Reporter
 Phil Jensen - - - - - Reporter
 Christina Cavallaro - - - - - Reporter
 Matt Schwab - - - - - Reporter
 Laura Ness - - - - - Reporter

PAST STAFF:

Dana McGaugh - - - - - 1st Editor 1963
 Bob Seveal - - - - - Photographer, Reporter,
 Editor, Cartoonist
 David Lowell - - - - - Associate Publisher,
 Sales
 Gale Marshall - - - - - IT Consultant
 Janet Armantrout - - - - - Editor, Reporter, Layout
 Bruce Henderson - - - - - Reporter
 Bill Owens - - - - - Photographer
 Tom Gee - - - - - Artist
 Ron McNicoll - - - - - Reporter
 Pat Lane - - - - - Reporter
 Joan Boer - - - - - Reporter
 Alex Miller - - - - - Reporter
 Richard Yates - - - - - Reporter,
 Associate Editor
 Jory Aquino - - - - - Sales Executive
 Ramona Silva - - - - - Bookkeeper
 Tina Rose - - - - - Sales Manager
 Sara Owen - - - - - Account Executive

Plus, many others throughout the years!

Newspaper's Values Set by Past Leaders

Dana McGaugh

The Independent's first editor laid the groundwork for the future.

He brought to the editorial desk 19 years of experience as a reporter, editor and publisher. Newspapers produced under his supervision won major California Newspaper Association awards. His coverage of the Santa Clara city government, while serving as assistant publisher of the Santa Clara Journal, earned him an official resolution by the city council, commending him for the most complete and accurate coverage of city affairs that the city had received from a newspaper.

In a 1975 issue of the Valley Times, the reporter quotes Publisher Joan Seppala as saying that it was Dana who ingrained in The Independent staff the journalism principles that the paper followed over the years. Editorial decisions are made based on what benefits the community as a whole. Pressure from advertisers is not factored in.

McGaugh led the paper for approximately three years. He died of a heart attack castigating members of a city commission whom he believed were in the wrong.

Seppala states, "His crusading spirit made a lasting impression on all of us."

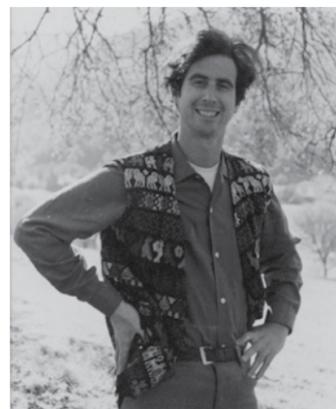


Dana McGaugh

Bob Seveal

Bob Seveal was down at the press in Milpitas all through the night as the first issue of The Independent rolled off the press on September 21, 1963. During his years at the paper, he worked as a photographer, sports writer and news reporter, before taking on the role of editor. Seppala stated, "In person, Bob was soft spoken. Behind his typewriter and then his computer, he was a warrior, passionately fighting for social justice and the environment. When I think of both his compassion and his bold courageous stands, I see him as a great leader. His editorials had a punch, accentuated by the cartoons he drew to accompany them. In his 49 years with the paper, he helped transform the Valley into a better place to live."

Addressing the specifics, Seppala noted that he worked to rally residents around a variety of innovative initiatives aimed at curbing harmful development. They included the 1972 Save All Valley Environment initiative. Seveal also supported initiatives to preserve Pleasanton Ridge starting in 1993, as well as Sunol Ridge. With his support, all the



Bob Seveal

(continued on pg. 42)

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Photojournalist Has an Eye for Both Pictures and News



Doug Jorgensen

On Aug. 18, 1984, a cruising-ordinance debate and a well-publicized National Cruise Night event resulted in a violent confrontation between police and an angry crowd in Livermore.

An estimated 10,000 to 12,000 people in up to 6,000 cars crowded First Street that night, according to a follow-up report on that night's police activities by the city's consultant Alan Kalmanoff. Traffic came to a

standstill. After the volume of cruisers pushed back the first police officers on the scene, the police returned in greater force, recalled Independent photographer Doug Jorgensen, who was in the crowd that night. "They had a massive police presence that retook the downtown. They were not too gentle about what they were doing." In the melee, the police forgot their crowd-control tactics, wrote Kalmanoff. But subsequent police reports to the city placed blame on the cruisers and categorized the event as a cruising problem. Jorgensen disagreed. "I said, no it was not. When somebody's trying to get out of the street and you're hitting them with a baton, that's a police problem ... I had pictures of this; I watched this." Jorgensen recounted his experience to then-Independent Editor Robert Several, and Several agreed to interview Jorgensen and run a story with a description of the events. "I got to hand it to Bob, because he knew the power structure, and all the politics, and we were basically saying that what was going on was not what we were being told," continued Jorgensen. "Bob stood up for what he thought were journalistic values. He completely understood what we were doing." Now a 41-year veteran at the newspaper, Jorgensen also manages payroll, circulation, and the many threads of community knowledge that come only with decades of coverage — threads that continue to weave the histories of the Tri-Valley and The Independent together. "If you think about what the valley would look like had The Independent never existed, it would look vastly different than it does today," he said. "We were one of the organizations that pushed for the redevelopment of downtown Livermore. The ridge over here — Pleasanton Ridge — that would have lux-

ury houses on it rather than a regional park spanning from Sunol to Dublin. There would be a town of 25,000 people north of Livermore, where there's agricultural land right now. There would not be a viable wine industry in the valley. ... The Bankhead Theater would not have been built if not for The Independent and Joan's vision. Some battles we've lost. But some battles we've won and have made a vast difference to the Tri-Valley."

Jorgensen's craft has been a mirror for the community over the decades. "When I am taking a picture, I try to look for artistic elements and those that would interest the reader," he said. "For instance, if I'm photographing a ribbon cutting, I may arrange people in a different order. I might add different elements, like



Independent photographer Doug Jorgensen has been a familiar sight at local events for over 40 years, including parades, sporting events and political gatherings. The photojournalist has been instrumental in offering the public an ongoing view of the community for decades.

props, to make the picture more unique."

Publisher Joan Seppala noted, "The artistry in Doug's photos attracts readers to our pages. In addition, Doug's 41 years of history with The Independent provide him with a knowledge of the Tri-Valley that is invaluable. He remembers the important events that need to be photographed, but he also understands the political issues that have defined the Tri-Valley. As a result, he can give advice to reporters that helps them cover their beats."

BANK OF ITALY (continued from pg. 9)

to Livermore," Zanette continued.

Sterling said the Bay Area Italian American community remember that Giannini wasn't just an amazing businessman, but he was also a good human being with enormous integrity.

"I think as parents we share what good businesspersons hold to be of value: you teach your children that all you have is your character and integrity, so every decision you make has to support your character and speak of your integrity," Sterling added. "And that's what AP Giannini did. That's the role model that he set for everyone who worked for him, and I am sure for the family as well."



Restoration of the Bank of Italy building was undertaken by Lynn and Joan Seppala, and has been the home of The Independent since 1996.



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IN DEFENSE OF OPEN SPACE

By David Jen

The insatiable demand for homes and the resulting urban sprawl in the East Bay came to a head in the late 1990s, when housing developer Shea Homes had plans to build 12,500 new homes — enough for some 30,000 people and 133,000 new vehicle trips daily — in the hills of North Livermore. But the valley’s residents pushed back.

Alameda County Measure D — the Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative — became the culmination of a continuum of growth-control efforts in the Tri-Valley. It began when the area first started to transform toward the end of the

for the West Bay for a long time, but it was accentuated in the late 1990s.”

Lori Souza, Board Chair of the Tri-Valley Conservancy (TVC), said, “Fremont, too, at one time, was a big agricultural area and had been essentially urbanized.”

Measure D passed in November 2000 with a 57% majority of voters countywide, protecting agricultural lands, wildlife and natural habitats from further development. It rejected the Shea Homes development project. The initiative established a county urban growth boundary (UGB) and prevented subdivisions in unincorporated Alameda County that would have allowed agricultural lands to be transformed into housing.

Two years later, the City of Livermore enacted its own North Livermore UGB. Pardee Homes then wrote a ballot initiative to break the City’s UGB. The Livermore voters quashed its North Livermore housing project that fell outside the UGB with a 72% “no” vote.

While urban sprawl develops housing along the cheaper properties on the pe-

riphery of a city, requiring longer runs for utilities and longer travel time for residents, infill development builds upon the more expensive parcels between existing developments, keeping residents and businesses closer together, and preserving more land for open-space uses

By establishing a county-wide UGB, voters concerned about unchecked development and the loss of natural habitats limited new housing to inside the boundary

“The open spaces around Livermore define us and contribute to the quality of life for all Livermore residents and for the entire region,” said Mayor John Marchand. “In North Livermore, we are protecting plants that exist nowhere else in the world. Our South Livermore Valley Specific Plan and our wine region are award-winning examples of our success. Managing smart growth and protecting open space is a delicate balance, but Livermore has demonstrated that we can be successful at it.”

Pleasanton Ridge

A presage to Measure D, plans in the 1970s for housing in the ridgeland west of Pleasanton also ignited a small but fierce band of residents in Sunol who opposed the idea.

Carl Nipper, owner of the former Thermal Fruit Company and its ridgeland property, began in 1973 a series of proposals to develop as many as 600 homes along the ridgetop.

A grassroots group, the Sunol Citizens Organized Regarding the Environment (SCORE), fought the idea for the next 10 years, culminating in a 1983 referendum that overturned the county approval of Rancho Sunol, the fifth and final attempt by Nipper to develop the ridge

With SCORE support, the Ridgeland Park Advisory Committee, formed in 1984, proposed a 2,700-acre park. A regional park feasibility study followed in 1986, with a district purchase of most of the Nipper ranch soon after. The Pleas-

anton Ridge Regional Park opened to the public in 1990, to be followed over the decades with more land purchases, reaching today’s 9,000-plus acres of contiguous open space

To further cement development limits, Pleasanton also adopted its own city UGB in 1996, just a few years prior to the county-wide boundary

“At that time, Pleasanton had a very environmentally conscious city council, and they wanted to control their growth because the city had, arguably, covered some of the best farmland in the Tri-Valley, and it was all lost,” said Schneider

Vineyard Protections

Efforts to block development on the Ruby Hill Winery in the 1980s also added checks on development in south Pleasanton, when a grassroots organization called Save Our Vineyards pressured residents to ask, “Do we really want to see agriculture go away?” said TVC board member David Kent

When the area straddling Isabel Avenue between Pleasanton and Livermore was incorporated, a difference in growth mindset between Pleasanton and Livermore developed. Pleasanton was more open to the rapid development that was underway, while Livermore was looking to slow development down. A series of lawsuits was generated between the two cities.

Then, County Supervisor Ed Campbell helped to put together an agreement, which included \$8.5 million in settlement funds. Those settlement funds eventually gave rise to the South Livermore Valley Agricultural Land Trust, the predecessor of present-day TVC, which oversees the South Livermore Valley Area Plan (SL-VAP). Created in 1993, the plan places development limits on agricultural lands in South Livermore for the promotion of viticulture and other agricultural uses

Livermore voters also passed Measure K, just six months before Measure D in March 2000, that established a South Livermore UGB to protect and enhance agricultural lands in South Livermore,

“Assets that support our agri-tourism industry, like the Wine Country Inn and the Wine Country Hotel at the Bankhead, will continue to increase the value of our wine country region,” said Marchand. “The sewer line down Tesla will allow for increased investment for the expansion of viticulture and will create a critical mass that will ensure its long-term viability.”

Schneider noted, “In 2022, Livermore voters did approve Measure P to create a sewer line to protect Livermore’s water quality,

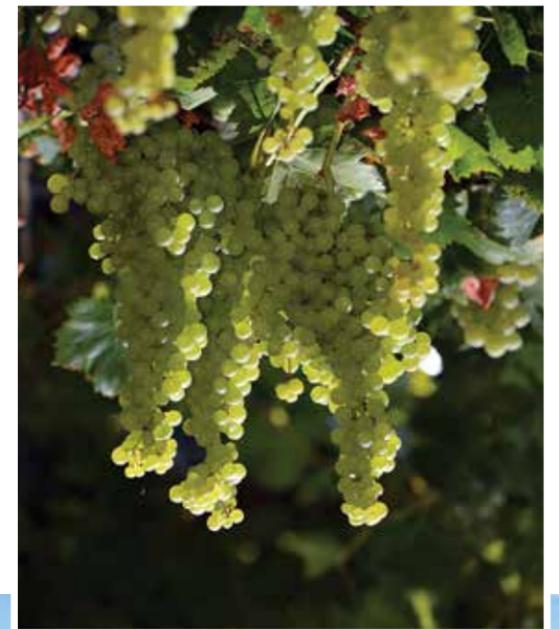
which helps the vineyards. However, the measure did not change the UGB to allow more housing.”

Dublin Urban Limit Line

In November 2000, Dublin voters approved Measure M establishing an urban limit line on the west side of Dublin to prevent sprawl in the west Dublin hills. In 2014, the Dublin City Council unanimously adopted a voter initiative establishing an urban limit line on the east side. Later that year, Dublin voters rejected a measure to

(continued on pg. 20)

BELOW: Grapes ripening on the vine at one of Livermore’s local wineries.



Tesla Park, situated off Tesla Road in Livermore, is named after the historic 19th-century Tesla coal mine in the area, not the car manufacturer.

last century from a rural, agricultural community into a high-tech, business center

Dick Schneider, co-author of Measure D, said, “There was this enormous proliferation of tech jobs in Silicon Valley. But the housing wasn’t keeping up with it. The East Bay had been bedroom communities

Trails along the Pleasanton Ridge offer spectacular views of the Tri-Valley.



(continued from pg. 19)

move the east urban limit line to allow a 2000 unit housing development in Doolan Canyon.

In Retrospect

Twenty years after the passage of Measure D, a review prepared for the Alameda County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) concluded that the initiative and its subsequent amendments proved to be “highly effective” at directing urbanization within the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton and Livermore, despite continued population growth of some 70,000 people and 22,300 new housing units since 2000

“No amendments to the UGB have been made and no expansion of existing Spheres of Influence to support urbanization have occurred since the year 2000,” read the report.

LAFCo also described, as a result of the measure, a “continuous greenbelt outside the UGB” including the Pleasanton ridgelines, Doolan and Collier Canyons, Brushy Peak, Bethany Reservoir, Sycamore Grove

Regional Park, Del Valle Regional Park, the Sunol Regional Wilderness, and the South Livermore wine country

Meanwhile, the TVC currently holds 3,882 acres under conservation easement for farming, 643 acres for habitat preservation and 500 acres for parkland

“It’s not just a question of preventing development on the land, but actually having the development rights removed from the land so that it will stay in perpetuity as open space,” said Kent. “Getting close to 4,000 acres of ag land under a conservation easement — that’s a big accomplishment.”

Schneider, however, would write the measure differently, if given the chance to do it again

“What we didn’t anticipate was a big push for industrial scale solar-energy development,” he said. “At the time Measure D was being developed, there were no big plans for sprawling, solar-energy development... Not very long after Measure D passed, because the federal government enacted a bunch of tax credits, there was a big push for large-scale solar.”

The Aramis solar project in North Livermore now plans to build some 100 megawatts of solar-generation capacity on 410 acres of North Livermore — land outside the UGB which has been designated for Large Parcel Agriculture uses. While Aramis has described the power plant as a compatible use, Schneider has identified the project as inconsistent with Measure D, questioning the overlap between power plants and agriculture

Questions of just how to use Bay Area land with solar or open space will therefore continue.

Today, Livermore is facing the county’s recent vote to develop buildings associated with a cemetery outside the UGB and the Livermore Council’s consideration of industrial and commercial developments east of Greenville Road, also outside the UGB.

The Independent will continue to provide news coverage of these issues. In its editorials, The Independent has supported those who have fought for decades to protect our surrounding open space and will continue to do so.

Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve at one time was used almost exclusively as ranch land. Under the East Bay Regional Park District’s multi-use land management policy however, cattle continue to graze in the 6,859-acre wilderness.



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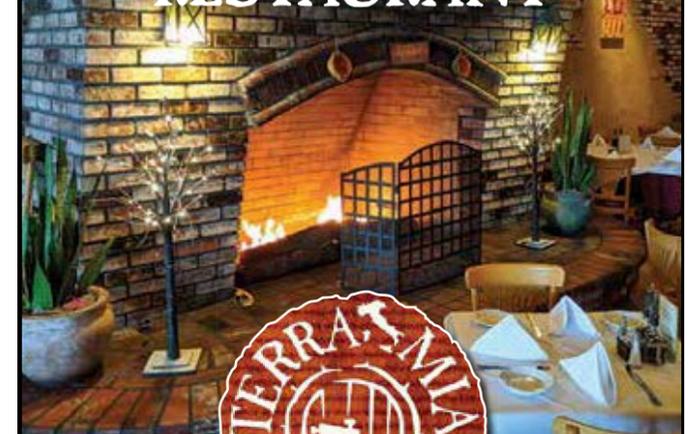
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Tri-Valley Addresses Broad Range of Environmental Issues



Windmills at sunset along the Altamont Pass

By Christina Cavallaro

A fight to preserve the environment has been a central theme in the Tri-Valley over the 60 years of The Independent's news coverage. In addition to the efforts covered in the previous article, the following showcases community accomplishments.

TESLA PARK PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY

Jean King, a Tri-Valley Conservancy board member, noted there has been a fight to preserve Tesla Park and to protect it from becoming an off-road vehicle place in order to save its biodiversity and maintain its ecological merits. After a 20-year fight, state lawmakers prevailed in 2022. A new bill placed \$29.8 million into an off-highway motorized vehicle trust fund for off-road enthusiasts to find a new location so that Tesla could be saved.

ALTAMONT LANDFILL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Waste Management of Alameda County wanted to expand the Altamont Landfill. They were sued by the County of Alameda, the City of Livermore, the City of Pleasanton, Sierra Club, Northern California Recycling Association, and Al-

tamont Landowners Against Rural Mismanagement. As part of the 1999 settlement agreement, a fund was created as a "tipping fee" to mitigate the harm it imposed. That money was put into an Open Space Fund.

Livermore as the host community (closest to the landfill) received 20% of the tipping fees, monies that were used to build the Bankhead Theater.

PROGRESSIVE EFFORTS IN RECYCLING

According to Donna Cabanne, a Livermore resident, an additional 20% of the Altamont Landfill Settlement funds were used to support recycling and waste reduction education. As a result, the Altamont Education Recycling Board was established, which creates impactful work within the schools and the county, establishing recycling programs. "They've done a great job educating students and their parents through PTA and different activities to look at how you reduce plastics that we know are getting into our water, and we are ingesting them," Cabanne noted.

Further, they were very effective in working with Oakland Unified School District, in particular, Nancy Deming, Sustain-

ability Manager for the Oakland Unified School District. "They had a wonderful system that was a model throughout California and beyond." Unfortunately with COVID, the program has not been able to continue at the level that was anticipated, but Cabanne and others are hopeful that it will come back.

The organization was especially effective at getting the Education Advisory Board and Go Green to ban one-time use plastics, particularly, in restaurants. They went so far as to have people bring containers into Starbucks and to different restaurants to collect plastic materials.

Dick Schneider, a local activist, confirmed that the whole county has benefited from the recycling program.

BAN ON FRACKING

Another positive step in the right

direction has been a countywide ban on fracking. Fracking has created problems not just related to oil, but also the terrain below. Cabanne shared that there is even a possible link between fracking and earthquakes.

CRUSADE FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Making a top 10 list is not always something to applaud, especially when it's a top 10 for worst air quality. Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan confirmed that the Tri-Valley did indeed make the list during an address she gave on Climate Change on June 8, 2023. She noted that it was due in part to the geography of the Valley, but also because of the trucks that go from the port to I-5 and right through our communities. In 2020, we had 56 Spare the Air Days, some due to wildfire, but still

considerable.

Bauer-Kahan discussed one main area of focus as clean trucking. "We are investing heavily in clean trucking," she said. "Trucks turn over fast, so forcing new trucks to be clean energy is great."

She went on to say that the port is about to install a hydrogen fueling station, so trucks can fuel up before they head into our valley.

She also noted that scientists are predicting there will be no more water in the Sierra in 24 years. And that, Cabanne noted, "means we are going to be short on water and clean water is going to be an issue. And that means staying vigilant in our efforts to fight the proliferation of microplastics and continue focusing on the ways and measures to call out and reduce the use of the worst offenders."



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Regional Commitment to the Disadvantaged

By Larry Altman

The Independent has a long history of supporting Tri-Valley organizations and city services that aid the region's disadvantaged. Whether it's running public service announcements or writing articles and editorials that focus on their causes, The Independent supports numerous non-profits, including those that assist the unhoused, provide shelter for domestic violence victims, or offer food, medical supplies and health care.

Livermore Mayor John Marchand called the local nonprofit organizations "an integral part of what makes the Tri-Valley such a remarkable place to live."

"The man for whom our community was named, Robert Livermore, was known throughout the region for his kindness and generosity," Marchand said. "I believe that spirit continues to live on in the DNA of our community and it is exemplified by the tremendous work that is done every day by our non-profit organizations."

Here are just a few of the dozens of Tri-Valley organizations and city-run services that serve the region and regularly find themselves in The Independent's news pages:

In late 2022 and early 2023, CityServe of the Tri-Valley collected coats and blankets for those in need, provided hotel rooms for 22 unhoused residents during the winter storms, and delivered 200 gift bags to seniors on Christmas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CityServe dispersed more than \$1 million in

rental assistance to Tri-Valley residents, helped to house 74 unhoused people, distributed 33,000 masks, gloves and PPE items, and managed over 90 people in hotels.

Operated out of the Pleasanton Senior Center, CityServe last year acquired Senior Support of the Tri-Valley to provide greater aid for senior citizens, offering food and shelter assistance, financial counseling and vocational training, legal guidance, and help with medical, dental and behavioral health needs.

In July, Marchand and fellow Mayors Melissa Hernandez of Dublin and Karla Brown of Pleasanton broke ground on Axis Community Health's Second Street Clinic in Livermore.

A Tri-Valley institution for more than 50 years providing health care services to those in need, the new Health Hub will offer dental, behavioral health and medical services. Axis Community Health has locations in all three cities.

Shepherd's Gate in Livermore specializes in offering safe places for women and children suffering from domestic violence, homelessness and addiction. Shepherd's Gate also provides a long-term 12- to 16-month Christ-centered recovery program in every area of the lives of those they help: physical, spiritual, emotional, recovery, parenting, education and career, legal, financial, and family reunification, for instance. The organization also has programs for children.

In April, The Independent covered



FROM TOP: Volunteers give away free masks to the community during the height of the pandemic at Inklings Coffee and Tea shop in downtown Pleasanton. Ronnie Forbes, founder of One Nation Dream Makers in Livermore, hands out food to local residents. Tri-Valley Haven volunteers in Livermore box up food packages for distribution. CityServe staff set up information stations in the Tri-Valley to provide service access for those in need.

the three cities' efforts to help fund Tri-Valley Haven's renovation plan to update its Shiloh House shelter, which has assisted domestic violence victims for decades. A new shelter will house 45 beds instead of the current 30, along with counseling rooms, a recreation room, a garden, and safe indoor and outdoor play areas for children.

Tri-Valley Haven's Sojourner House also provides temporary shelter for homeless families, offering them separate bedrooms, a stocked kitchen, three full bathrooms and laundry facilities. Sojourner House accepts two-parent families, single fathers with children, and families with teenage boys.

In recent years, The Independent followed the successful opening of

(continued on pg. 28)

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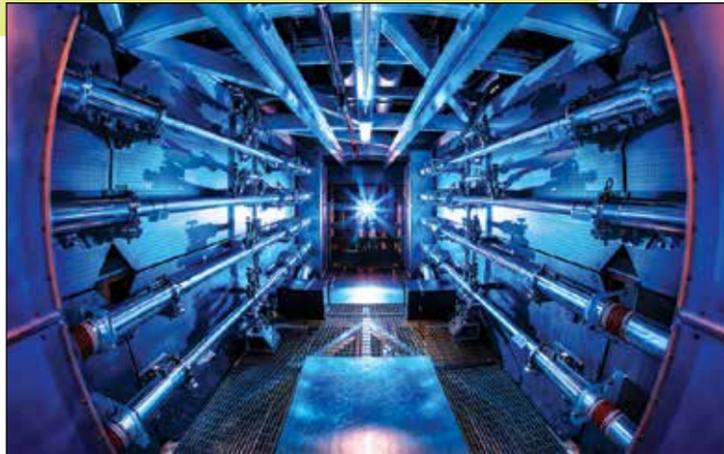
60 YEARS OF SCIENCE IN LIVERMORE

By Jeff Garberson

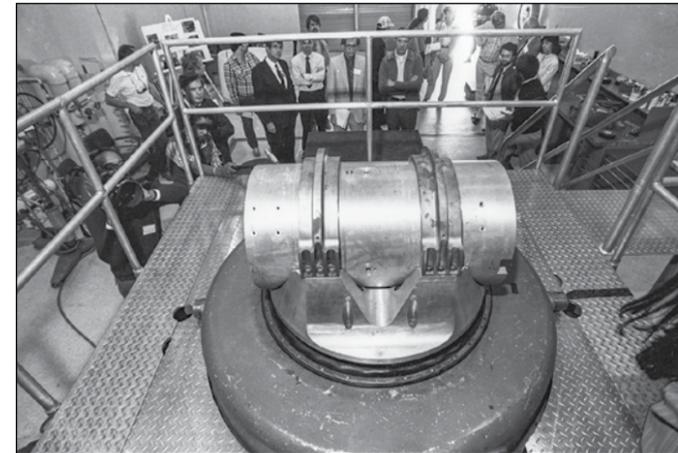
Science and technology in the Livermore area are dominated by the activities at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the local branch of Sandia National Laboratories.

Both laboratories are funded by the National Nuclear Security Administration in Washington with a primary mission of making sure U.S. nuclear weapons are safe, secure and reliable. In that effort, Sandia is known as an engineering lab that supports the physics design that comes from LLNL. Sandia also does plenty of science, while LLNL is also strong in engineering. Both laboratories work on a very wide range of non-defense projects as well.

Here is a summary of a few select science and technology highlights from 6 decades that have passed since The Independent published its first issue in 1963.



The National Ignition Facility (NIF) Target Chamber at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). On Dec. 5, 2022, researchers at the LLNL's NIF, conducted the first experiment to ever achieve net energy gained from nuclear fusion. The experiment was a historic event for the laboratory and the world. (Photo courtesy of LLNL)



Livermore's science and technology laboratories are charged with ensuring U.S. nuclear weapons are secured and safe. (Photo courtesy of LLNL)

Nuclear weapons

By the time the Independent opened, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, with engineering support from Sandia, had already made profound contributions to the nation's nuclear weapons program.

It had shrunk the size and weight of thermonuclear warheads so that they could be carried by missiles small enough to fit on submarines, creating a virtually invulnerable deterrent force during a time of deep concern about the Soviet Union.

In the years that followed, LLNL and Sandia would develop advanced safety features to reduce the chance of radioactive material spreading in the event of an accident.

They would also learn to tailor the energy output of a nuclear explosive that could be used in missile defense in the vacuum of space or to stop a hypothetical tank invasion in an



Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's NIF team has been recognized throughout the world for their groundbreaking, historic achievements. (Photo courtesy of the Rotary Club of Livermore)

increasingly crowded Europe.

Many disciplines combine to create the features of a modern nuclear weapon, but the heart of much of the effort has always been reliance on calculations made with the most powerful computers available at the time.

That remains true today, when computers are literally trillions of times faster than in the Laboratory's early days. In the 1950s and '60s, LLNL's constant demand for more powerful computers helped spur the growth of the industry.

Decades later, powerful computers are used in many other industrial and scientific endeavors, from oil prospecting to automotive design and from weather forecasting to climate modeling.

Still, LLNL is at the forefront of computations, with

components of the world's fastest computer, called El Capitan, already being installed, with scientific calculations scheduled to benefit the weapons program next year.

El Capitan is expected to be the first computer capable of operating at a speed of 2 quintillion operations per second – 2 exaflops, in computer parlance.

The Laboratory's main non-defense effort in the early days tried to harness nuclear fusion as an energy source by using magnetic forces to confine a superhot gas of heavy hydrogen in which fusion reactions could occur.

LLNL's scientific approach to the challenge was known as the "magnetic mirror." Although it made important progress, the mirror program was phased out in the 1980s as budgetary limitations led to Washington's decision to support the so-called tokamak approach pursued at Princeton.

Foreign assessments

In the meantime, in a very different area of concern, the nation's need to understand potential threats from other nations led LLNL in 1965 to form an intelligence organization linked to the CIA.

Then called Z Division (now Z Program), the group initially analyzed samples from Russian nuclear tests to help the nation's intelligence community gain insights into Soviet weapons technology.

Over time, its work has expanded to shed light on an expanded range of possible foreign threats in fields ranging from biological agents to data collection to additive manufacturing.

Laser technologies

In the 1970s, LLNL turned to laser

technology to approach two distinct goals: develop more efficient ways to enrich uranium fuel for nuclear power plants, and explore an alternate route to harnessing nuclear fusion.

To improve the economics of supplying fuel for nuclear power, Laboratory researchers developed a laser-based approach to uranium enrichment that was significantly more efficient than the industrial methods then in use.

The success of the technique and the importance of the

(continued on pg. 28)



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SCIENCE
(continued from pg. 27)

nuclear industry led Congress in the 1990s to create a private company, the U.S. Enrichment Corp., to commercialize the technology.

By the end of the decade, however, a worldwide surplus of enriched uranium from a collapsed Soviet Union meant the technology was never needed.

As an alternative approach to harnessing fusion, Lab physicists aimed to use powerful laser beams to squeeze a target capsule filled with fusion fuel to astronomical pressures and temperatures, igniting a miniature thermonuclear explosion.

For LLNL and Washington, learning to generate these small bursts of thermonuclear energy would open up a powerful new way to study nuclear weapons processes in the laboratory without full-scale nuclear testing. (The last U.S. nuclear test was carried out in 1992.)

Independently, energy enthusiasts inside and outside the Laboratory hoped the laser approach might speed the plodding route to fusion energy experienced by magnetic fusion researchers.

But the practical challenge of using laser beams to control and harness fusion turned out to be harder than early calcula-

tions suggested.

Over the next several decades, Laboratory researchers carried out experiments using ever more powerful lasers, learning the fine details of creating miniature fusion explosions from small, fuel-filled capsules.

These improved the ability of defense scientists to study in the laboratory processes that more closely resembled actual bomb explosions.

They achieved a historic success last December, when the world's most energetic laser, LLNL's National Ignition Facility (NIF), ignited a fusion target and caused it to explode with 50% more energy than the target consumed.

December's success was repeated more recently, in late July.

Extensions of these efforts continue today, as researchers plan future experiments aimed at generating still greater energy return.

It's a program designed to help the U.S. make sure its nuclear weapons are safe, secure and reliable, but energy advocates may be excused for hoping that it will also provide clues to finding a shortcut to the long-sought goal of harnessing fusion energy.

DISADVANTAGED
(continued from pg. 25)

Goodness Village, which provides tiny homes at Crosswinds Church in Livermore for 28 Tri-Valley residents who were formally unhoused for at least a year. The Independent has written an editorial in support of their plans for expansion and publicizes fundraising efforts to make Goodness Village possible.

In May, The Independent focused on One Nation Dream Makers' (ONDM) efforts to raise funds to complete its work providing food to help alleviate hunger in Alameda County.

Dublin's Senior Center provides a place for mature residents to spend their days with friends, and take dance and exercise classes. The Center annually displays photos of military veterans for its Wall of Heroes around Veterans Day and hosted a vaccine clinic in 2022.

Marchand and Brown praised the work of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance (TVNPA), which brings organizations together to improve their services.

Each year, the Tri-Valley's mayors speak at a town hall hosted by the TVNPA to emphasize working together to meet the region's needs.

"The Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance is based in Livermore in the CommonPoint Center and over 300 organizations participate along with thousands of volunteers to provide a personal touch," Marchand explained.

Marchand added that the Tri-Valley cities have five shelters for the disadvantaged, the homeless and the abused.

"I am very proud of how our Human Services Department partners with our local nonprofits to accomplish the work that the city cannot," Marchand said. "The cities of the Tri-Valley also work together, sharing grants and resources with regional organizations like Axis Health, CityServe, Open Heart Kitchen and so many others who serve the residents of our entire Tri-Valley."

"I am proud of how the members of our community support the efforts of our nonprofit organizations and how they continue to improve the quality of life for our residents in Livermore and throughout the Tri-Valley."

Brown said that in her role as mayor, she is "pleased to connect many generous residents to seats on nonprofit boards of directors, to positions on human services and housing commissions, or to join me in attending fundraising events in support of our local agencies."

"The sentiments of many within our community is, 'I have been very fortunate in my life, and now it is time for me to give back, but how?'" Brown said. "One thing is for sure — we need more volunteers, new board members and more financial supporters. This is your chance to bring a friend and volunteer together to make twice the difference."



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TRI-VALLEY ARTS — A RETROSPECTIVE

By David Jen

On about 140 nights out of the year, something is going on at the Bankhead Theater in downtown Livermore. Since its grand opening in 2007, its 507 seats have hosted nationally recognized artists, supported regional events and provided space for community groups, inspiring the imaginations and emotions of the Tri-Valley and beyond.

And the new 2023-24 season, which opened with the Brilliance at the Bankhead Gala starring Emmy and Tony Award-winner Jason Alexander on September 9, will not let up either. The season including performances by Paula Cole, Five for Fighting, and The Righteous Brothers, to name a few.

But what were the theater's early days like? The origins of the famed, intimate space trace back to the interests and ambitions of the people who lived here during the transformative second half of the 20th century in the Tri-Valley.

In 1952, the Lawrence Livermore

National Lab opened as a branch of the University of California Radiation Laboratory in response to surprise nuclear-weapons testing by the Soviet Union. Since then, the lab, with accomplishments in fields ranging from material science to computer science to fusion energy, has drawn world-renowned scientists and engineers to live among Livermore's bucolic landscape.

"I really believe a lot of what's here (in the arts) is a result of the Livermore Lab being out here," said Chris Carter, Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center (LVPAC) executive director. "Prior to that, Livermore was kind of a rural town. Then, once you have these highly educated people living in a community, it kind of drives the demand for art and music."

A 1966 article published in The Independent by Books Universal owner James Crockett noted how arts groups were expanding at the time, but needed more support.

"There were people that were perform-



Tri-Valley Repertory Theater's production of "The Little Mermaid"

ing, people that put together an acting group looking for spaces to perform in," said Carter.

In response, community members Tania Selden, Jim Crockett, Joan Kinney (Seppala), Don Miller, and Charles Speake studied the prospect of an arts council, and formed the Livermore Cultural Arts Council. The council's first meeting was held on Oct. 10, 1966.

BELOW: Celebrating Lunar New Year with a performance by the Xiaopei Chinese dance company in front of the Bankhead Theater in Livermore.



The economic boom that began with the lab continued on through the development of the Bishop Ranch and Hacienda Business Park in 1978 and 1982, and the establishment of Silicon Valley as an international high-tech leader in the 1990s. No longer a bedroom community, the Tri-Valley became a vibrant job center that drew people and culture into the area, recalled Livermore vintner Philip Wente.

Livermore per capita income grew some 465% between 1980 and 2010, while nationwide inflation rose only 165%, according to data from the US Census



Modern art sculpture in Livermore's Lizzy Park located at First Street and South Livermore Avenue.

Bureau. Pleasanton incomes grew 509% and Dublin incomes grew 490% in the same period.

"The interest in bringing along the social services was very strong, whether it was better schools, better parks, better transportation," said Wente. "I remember hearing this all the time: I want this to be the best place to live, work and raise a family, anywhere in the world."

With that sort of drive, it was easy to engage people about how to bring amenities, such as performing arts, into the

area, he continued.

Wente recalled the South Livermore Valley Area Plan, adopted in 1993, that aimed to revitalize the area's wine industry and how it inspired people to apply the same revitalization efforts to the downtown as well.

"A lot of like-minded people thought, well, why don't we do a similar kind of plan with the city?" he said.

In 1998, Wente, Seppala, and Phillip Dean formed a nonprofit corporation to develop a performing arts center as part of Livermore's downtown transformation — an organization that would eventually become the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center (LVPAC).

Many groups, such as the Livermore-Amador Symphony and the Livermore Valley Opera, were active at the time and looking for spaces, said Carter.

"Finding a home for a lot of those organizations was kind of the first part of that," he continued.

Seppala noted that it took almost a decade to raise the money needed to fund the whole project.

"County Supervisor Scott Haggerty led the way," she explained. "He found \$20 million to give LVPAC, an amount sufficiently large to build confidence that the project was feasible. Then, over time, community donors stepped forward with their contributions. Nancy Bankhead arranged for her family to become one of the earliest donors of significant size. They were given the naming rights to the theater."

Designed by architect Steve MacCracken and built by Plant Construction, construction on the Bankhead began in October 2005 and was completed in September 2007, with its grand opening the following month.

Firehouse Arts Center

Around that time, the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Foundation also formed with the intent to preserve Pleasanton's historic Fire Station #1 as an arts center.

Construction on the Firehouse Arts Center in downtown Pleasanton began in 2008 and was completed in 2010. Its 227-seat theater, gallery space, classrooms, and grand lobby have provided theater performances, youth classes and art exhibits, among other activities, ever since.

"The Firehouse Arts Center, a beautiful work of art in and of itself, located in the heart of Pleasanton, serves as an inviting beacon, strengthening community image and a sense of place," said Pleasanton Recreation Manager Rachel Prater.

A Community Locked Down

Then, in March 2020, lockdown measures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic shut the Bankhead's doors for 14 months.

"The most difficult day of my professional career was when I had to tell 80% of the staff that they couldn't come back to work for an indefinite amount of time," said Carter. "I felt like we had about three to six months (before funds would run out)."

But the arts center's philanthropic base, which accounts for half of the Bankhead's revenue annually, carried the theater through.

"The beginning of this last year was



Joan Seppala, publisher of The Independent and a primary fundraiser for the Bankhead Theater, attends the 2007 inaugural ribbon cutting event in Livermore.

still tough — last summer and into the fall," said Carter. "And I think we've had some patrons that will never come back. But we're pretty close to where we were

(continued on pg. 41)



DUBLIN

An In-Depth Look at its History

By Dawnmarie Fehr

The City of Dublin has been an incorporated city for four decades, but it was a community long before that, according to former city manager Richard Ambrose.

The small “city at the crossroads” started out in the old west. It was an agricultural village until the 1940s, when the little town boomed as the Navy used the area during World War II. Tons of supplies and hundreds of thousands of sailors were processed through bases located in and around Dublin. Many of the men and women who saw the rolling hills around the Tri-Valley and experienced the mild climate came back after the war to settle permanently.

Working class families from the Bay Area also moved out to Dublin during the 1960s when developers began planning master communities modeled on successful, similar attempts in southern California. Homes were affordable; people began building a community.

Local historian Steve Minniear said, “The developers decided to replicate what they had done in San Diego here, specifically in Dublin, in part because they knew that freeways and roads were going to be upgraded.”

He explained, “They plopped down what they knew was needed at the time, which was lower cost, kind of ‘starter’ houses, and it’s where people could come in the 1960s and get their first house. It was a brand-new community, and it appealed to a lot of people who had lived in places like San Leandro or San Francisco.”

As the homes were built and filled, families began banding together to create traditions and celebrate holidays. Minniear said annual events like the St. Patrick’s Day parade came from the folks who settled in Dublin 60 years ago, eager to build



Sean Diamond Park in Dublin. Located in the Positano subdivision, the park is named for former Dublin resident Army Staff Sergeant Sean Diamond, who was killed in Iraq in 2009.

community.

“The idea of getting together with your neighbors became important,” he said, noting there wasn’t much to do at the time. “Everyone was new, and they all tended to be young families, so they would do stuff together. And what better thing to do than have a parade and heritage events? And that all morphed together to what we have today with this St. Patrick’s Day parade. It’s really the grass roots of making a celebration in your brand-new community.”

In addition to local events, Dublin is known for its parks and other city amenities: city hall, the community center, state-of-the-art school buildings, the Dublin Library and the Dublin Senior Center. These and other amenities were a direct result of Dublin’s rapid growth. The city allowed 17,200 units to be built from 1995 to 2023. Because of this, and the fact the population grew by 58% between 2010 and 2020, the city is the second fastest growing in the Bay Area, second only to Brentwood. Critics said houses went up too fast and growth was

poorly managed. Others insist the growth was necessary to build good facilities, support schools and attract jobs.

“I completely and absolutely reject the characterization of sprawling housing,” said former mayor Tim Sbranti, who feels the city’s growth in housing was well managed. “If anything, we need more housing development ... companies are only going to come to a community where there is a workforce.”

Dublin Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Inge Houston said local businesses championed incorporation from the beginning.

“With no city government, the local business leaders formed the Dublin Chamber of Commerce in 1968 to provide the structure needed for a growing community,” she said. “The Chamber of Commerce grew under the leadership of CEO Nancy Feeley, when the membership represented a service-oriented membership base in the 1980s and ‘90s.”

Dubliners made two failed attempts at incorporation, but finally voted for it in 1981. On Feb. 1, 1982, the city became officially incorporated. Initial goals included improving the appearance of the city and lighting. Officials negotiated with the Alameda County Sheriff’s office for police services, discussed how to develop the east side of town, formed a planning commission, and began work to unify the school district. What started as a small town of 15,000 people has now grown to 72,000.

Houston said the chamber’s membership is now more diverse, with companies representing tech, medical, automotive and corporate fields. The chamber also morphed with the times into an information and advocacy-based organization, hosting everything from candidate forums during elections to advances in communication and tech to suit the needs of the Dublin Chamber membership.

“Sixty years ago, Dublin was a sleepy little village, just beginning to evolve from a quiet farming community to a suburban town,” said Mayor Melissa Hernandez. “Over the course of the past 60 years, Dublin has become a thriving community with a flourishing economy; an award-winning school district; vibrant, diverse communities; wonderful events; safe and well-paved roads; and beautiful amenities.”

In 2022, on the occasion of the City’s 40th Anniversary of Incorporation, a video was created to celebrate Dublin’s history. To view, visit www.bit.ly/DUB_movie.

RIGHT, FROM TOP: Families participate in parachute games at the public celebration of Dublin’s Sean Diamond Park in 2018. Kaiser Permanente’s radiological facility opened in 2019. “Splatter” performs at one of the city’s various public events. Former Dublin City Councilmember Sean Kumagai stands in front of city hall for the raising of the Gay Pride flag. The Sheriff’s honor guard attends the opening of the new police facility in 2020.



Issues Championed by The Independent

By Robert Frank

Robert Frank served as interim editor for *The Independent* for eight months after editor Janet Armantrout died in August 2019. She served *The Independent* for 55 years. After a new editor was hired, Frank returned to the consulting editor role that he has held for five years.



Tom Gee, *The Independent's* artist, created a drawing of the newspaper's first home in 1963 on the second floor of the Schenone building shown above on First Street near the flagpole. In 1996, the paper moved to The Bank of Italy at the northeast corner of First Street and Livermore Avenue, where it remains today.

It's both amazing and rare in 2023 for a community's newspaper to still have its founder and owner reliably publishing local news after 60 years.

Today, most of the newspapers in the greater Bay Area are owned by the same Manhattan hedge fund, whose top concern is wringing every little drop of profit from increasingly homogenized news products. Detached owners aren't likely to be very concerned, for very long, about communities they've never seen.

Joan Seppala arrived in Livermore in 1962 and found a small agricultural town with a major highway ripping right through the heart of downtown. Dublin was a county enclave and Pleasanton's

biggest industry was digging gravel. Yet the population was booming — the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was crucial to national security at the height of the Cold War.

The Tri-Valley, Seppala thought, could use a solid local newspaper to help understand this rapid growth and the changes that were to come, while preserving its unique charm and character. So, Seppala — a 24-year-old crusader in what was considered a man's profession — found financial backers and started *The Independent*.

Since 1963, *The Independent* has vigorously championed causes close to the heart of the community — from protection of open spaces to the enhancement of local education, arts and sciences. The paper's mission also calls for an unyielding support of the disadvantaged and a fierce challenge to public figures who misuse power.

The Tri-Valley would look very different without *The Independent*, which over the years has been instrumental in preserving the area's ranchlands and vineyards from development and in establishing Livermore's Bankhead Theater, a cultural arts center.

Here are just a few of the issues championed by *The Independent* over the years:

1970-72 — Long before California started charging developers impact fees, Livermore's SAVE initiative limited development unless adequate services, such as new schools, were already in place. Because of the city's 10% growth rate, schools were in double-session and the city's budget was overwhelmed. The initiative was challenged all the way to the California Supreme Court, where it was upheld. Throughout it all, *The Independent* was boycotted by local inter-

ests who organized to put the paper out of business by pulling advertising. The three-day-a-week paper was forced to become a weekly. But in the end, more schools were built to handle the growing need without overcrowding.

1981 — Started the Harvest Wine Celebration to support local wineries and promote them to a larger audience.

1980-1981 — Supported the incorporation of Dublin, which resulted in voters deciding to become their own city. Until then, Dublin was controlled by the county and residents had little say in its development.

1983 — Campaigned to stop development on Pleasanton Ridge. Editor Bob Several was intimately involved with the Sunol campaign, which he supported with stories and editorials. Today, a regional park and Pleasanton city park span the ridge from Sunol to Dublin.

1990s — Supported the redevelopment of downtown Pleasanton, which by the mid-1980s had become rundown.

1993 — Supported the South Livermore Valley Area Plan, codified into law vineyard agriculture and backed the creation of conservation easements to preserve and increase Livermore's wine grape growing acreage. At the time, there were fewer than 20 wineries in the area; there now are more than 40.

2000 — Crusaded for Alameda County's Measure D, the Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative, that establishes a county urban growth boundary, restricting the amount of development allowed north of Livermore in county unincorporated agricultural lands.

(continued on pg. 46)

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LYNN SEPPALA

Behind the Scenes Supporter of The Independent

Lynn Seppala, Independent publisher Joan Seppala's husband, serves on the board of directors of Inland Valley Publishing, the company that owns The Independent. He has played a big role in the history of the paper.



Lynn Seppala

Joan recalls that when The Independent was boycotted for its support of the SAVE Initiative in 1972, Lynn helped keep the paper afloat. An acronym for Save All Valley Environments, the SAVE Initiative was supported by Livermore residents to address its 23% annual growth rate that placed schools on double sessions and negatively impacted the city's finances, straining water and sewer services.

Joan said, "Lynn Seppala, who had a modest starting salary at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), loaned us his paycheck at the beginning of each month. However, we had to return it at the end of the month so that he could pay his bills. Some say that I married Lynn for his money!"

Joking aside, Joan says that Lynn has always been there when needed, whether it was to provide moral support, funds

or help to solve a problem. When Janet Armantrout died, The Independent's editor for 31 years, Lynn helped to edit the paper until her replacement was found. Lynn was also the lead manager of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades to the historic Bank of Italy building on the northeast corner of First Street and Livermore Avenue, enabling it to serve as The Independent's home.

Lynn is an active member of the community and a well-known scientist.

He has been a longtime supporter of local cultural, educational and environmental organizations, playing many leadership roles. He serves on the boards of the Del Valle Fine Arts, Rae Dorrough Speakers Series and the Livermore-Amador Symphony. For the Symphony, he has also been chosen to work as its treasurer. Previously, Lynn was selected as the chair of the local Pacific Chamber Orchestra board. He has been elected to the Livermore Cultural Arts Commission board, a former chair, and continues to manage its Tuesday Tunes performances in front of the Bankhead Theater during the summer. Lynn is a founding member of the Las Positas College Foundation, formerly its chair, and currently works as chair of the Las Positas College Oversight Committee. He also sits on the UC Merced Foundation Committee. He was elected to the Tri-Valley Sierra Club, and then appointed as its chair.

In a story written about him at LLNL, Lynn was quoted as saying, "You need the arts for the spirit of the community. Having vibrant cultural arts helps bring jobs to the Livermore area. People want good schools, amenities, a clean environment and something to do culturally."

From the start, he helped support the construction of the Bankhead Theater, noting that the opening of the Bankhead Theater in Livermore has been a boon

for the cultural arts in the Tri-Valley, especially music organizations that now have a venue in which to perform.

Lynn has also made his mark as a scientist.

After earning a doctorate in optics at the University of Rochester in New York, he spent most of his career at the LLNL in Livermore. He retired in 2013 after 37 years. At the time of his retirement, he had most recently served as the chief optical designer for the laser fusion program.

"Dr. Seppala is considered one of the world's top experts in optical design," said Edward Moses, former principal associate director at LLNL. "Throughout his career, Lynn has tackled the most technically challenging optical problems and produced real and effective solutions to issues of national and international importance."

Those challenges have included designs for a linear accelerator that will advance studies in precision physics and the first-ever, in-laboratory thermonuclear ignition last December and this July that could lead to an unlimited source of energy. In addition, he led the optical design of the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) now being built in Chile.

Lynn's achievements are all the more impressive due to his personal struggles with a stroke at age 46 that paralyzed his right side and seriously affected his speech and cognitive abilities.

He overcame or compensated for the losses. He learned to become left-handed, walk again and ski expert runs despite his remaining disabilities. Regaining speech and cognitive abilities, he retained his position as chief optical designer, performing at even higher levels.

More recently, he helped lead the capital campaign that created a Certified Stroke Center at Stanford Health Care – Tri-Valley, a center that has saved lives.



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Dublin Unified School District

The 13,000 students at Dublin Unified School District are served by 14 schools, encompassing all grades from transitional kindergarten through high school. The district's oldest operating school – Murray Elementary – was founded in 1966, and its newest – Emerald High School – is slated to open in January 2024.

Superintendent Chris Funk joined the district in 2021 and led it out of the strict closures imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He works closely with his staff and teachers to support the district's mission of creating lifelong learners through safe environments fostering collective responsibility. The district collaborates with community stakeholders to reach this goal.

"Local media outlets serve as a bridge between the Dublin Unified School District and its community - not just Dublin, but the entire Tri-Valley," Funk said. "These resources help to illuminate our achievements, build awareness of our initiatives, foster stakeholder engagement, and nurture a sense of transparency."

For more information, call 925-828-2551 or visit www.dublin.k12.ca.us.

Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) operates 19 schools, including two comprehensive high schools and an adult education program. Led by Superintendent

Chris Van Schaack since 2022, the district's stated mission is to ensure each of its students graduates with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world.

"The Independent has consistently prioritized coverage of our schools, our students, and district initiatives," he said. "We are appreciative of their commitment to connecting our community to public education, especially for those who do not have direct ties to our district as parents, staff members, or elected board members."

For more information on LVJUSD, call 925-606-3200 or visit www.livermoreschools.org.

Pleasanton Unified School District

Pleasanton's school district is home to 15 schools offering top-of-the line public education to its residents for all grades, as well as a virtual academy serving students online. Established in 1988, the district's staff and students are led by Superintendent David Haglund, who shepherded his team through the COVID-19 pandemic. Its mission is to grow resourceful, resilient, responsible students who will make a better world.

The district is deeply embedded in the community,

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(continued on pg. 41)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The new gymnasium at Livermore High School was completed in June 2022. Seniors at Foothill High School in Pleasanton celebrate during graduation ceremonies. Las Positas Community College in Livermore was recently named the #1 community college in the state and #6 in the nation.




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My Recollections, Reflections and Regrets

By Barry Schrader

When asked to write a piece in commemoration of The Independent's 50th anniversary, I was both flattered and dismayed. It is great to be offered space in this special issue, but how could it be that I am old enough to remember back a half century. Other than John Oliver and Fred Dickey, I seem to be the oldest living competing newspaperman left.

I would have titled this piece "Joan the Giant Slayer" or "David Versus Goliath – and She Won." Her detractors, and I used to be one of them, will likely have less flattering thoughts about their least favorite fish wrapper.

It was 1967 when I first arrived in Livermore to take the editor's job with Floyd Spark's Herald & News, a morning daily that he said had little competition except for a "left-wing weekly put out by a Berkeley hippie woman." Floyd didn't seem too worried about losing any advertising since he was a right-wing Republican, as were most of the businessmen and professionals in Livermore at that time. He also didn't think the Rad Lab counted much, because they were all egg heads and far-out scientists, not interested in local issues.

I soon learned that The Independent, even though only issued weekly (plus Fridays and Sundays for a while), could scoop us with their experienced staff steeped in local issues, and using news contacts who would not deal with the conservative Herald. It became a focus of our paper every campaign, and during humungous growth versus no-growth battles, to attack The Independent's liberal stands and "radical no-growth candidates."

After two years, I departed Livermore for a job offer back at my roots in northern Illinois. After four years away, I accepted an enticing offer to be editor of a new morning daily entering the 'news-

This article was picked up from The Independent's 50th anniversary magazine and reprinted with permission from Barry Schrader a few weeks before he died in 2020.

paper wars" in the Livermore-Amador Valley (before the name "Tri-Valley" was thought of). The Valley Times was published by a longtime enemy of Floyd named Dean Leshner. They previously

but nearly committed suicide economically when all the realtors, auto dealers and most retail advertisers pulled their ads from the paper over its stand. The Independent dropped back to a week-



In a moment of levity, the three newspaper editors posed for a charity event promotion around 1974, acting out their competitive spirit in a staged pugilistic bout. From left: Al Fisher of The Pleasanton Valley Times, Barry Schrader of The Herald, and Bob Several of The Independent. (archival photo)

had a gentleman's agreement that Floyd stayed in Alameda County and Dean ruled the newspaper world in Contra Costa County. Then Floyd had bought the Village Pioneer and that started a turf war that only ended when the two men either sold their empires or died. Floyd died first. Soon though, I decided Floyd was a better boss and returned to the (now named) Tri-Valley Herald from 1972-1980.

In the 1971-72 growth battle, The Independent and its guru Don Miller had decided a ballot measure to slow growth was the weapon they needed to "stop the sprawling development from paving over the valley." It was called the SAVE Initiative (Save All Valley Environments) and caused the greatest political storm the valley had ever seen. The Independent's side won that particular battle,

ly. Joan must have had to subsidize the paper for several years after that. (I was never privy to her balance sheet though.)

Meanwhile, on the editorial side, I got in trouble sparring with Bob Several and his staff. I would run a column from time to time name-calling or admonishing The Independent. Bob retaliated, even firing off a letter to the editor, which I printed. My boss at the time, Dean, thought it ill-advised to give any space or even mention the paper, so he admonished me soundly. Then when I returned to the Herald, Floyd also ordered me to ignore them in print.

The only time I ever pulled a real coup on The Independent is when I hired their token conservative writer Walt Hecox away for better wages and better pay for his column. Walt expressed regret for leaving Joan whom he said was "like a

daughter" to less harassment from the "left-leaning young whipper-snappers" at the paper who delighted in making fun of his viewpoint. But that is another story all in itself.

After I left the newspaper wars in 1980, I came to respect the writing skills and well-backgrounded reporting by The Independent's staff. They would call me at Sandia for comment and often ran my news releases without cutting or changing words. I even started dropping by their office, first upstairs over the 1079 Club, then later in the old Bank of America edifice. Bob Several and I got better acquainted and had lunch together over at Dean's Café in P-town a couple of times. We would reminisce about the good old days of heated competition and how we skewered each other in columns.

Now as I look back on it, decades and thousands of miles ago, it was the best time of my career, facing head-to-head competition with the Indy and the Times.

Joan had started her dream on a shoestring and now 50 years later is still around to bask in the glory of having used her editorial slingshot (and clever savvy in other areas) to slay both giants – Floyd and Dean, today maintaining a clear lead over the struggling merged products that still come out daily, but have far less influence and local news than her paper.

So, congratulations to Joan, Janet, Ron, Doug and my good friend David Lowell, for their dedication, perseverance, and success after 50 years of fighting the good fight. I regret not being there today to make a toast to all the great people, past and present, who populated the Indy.

ARTS (continued from pg. 31)

pre-pandemic. And so I'm hopeful that we're kind of past that at this point."

Wente and Seppala, who both sit on the LVPAC Board, and Carter look forward to attracting audiences beyond the Tri-Valley through partnerships they have been building with other venues, such as Firehouse Arts, the Grand Theatre in Tra-

cy, and Las Positas College. "You know, I said earlier, we're active about 140 days a year; I'd like that to be 365 days a year," said Carter. "There are not many communities (our size) that can boast a venue like this in their downtown. ... I hope people continue to discover it and come out and enjoy it as much as possible."

SCHOOLS (continued from pg. 38)

top-notch education through 8th grade. Sunol grads move onto high school in Pleasanton, but retain fond memories of their tight-knit community back home. Superintendent Molleen Barnes fills the role of school principal as well, and knows her district – and its challenges – well.

"Although we are so close to Silicon Valley and in the Bay Area, our school is a hidden gem, as it is in an incredible bucolic setting that makes you feel that you are quite a ways from the hustle and bustle of towns and cities," she said.

Despite a movement in 1987 to have the school absorbed by Pleasanton's school district, local residents have worked to keep their school independent and unique, and view it as the heart of the town. It is home to local club meetings and local theater, often serving as a central gathering place. Because of the town's small size, only about 20% of students are local residents. Others come from Bay Area cities, including Union City, Newark and Milpitas.

"It is such a joy and privilege to be a part of this community and support our beloved treasure, our children, as they journey through their educational experience," said Barnes.

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Las Positas College

Nestled in the foothills of Mt. Diablo in the northern portion of the City of Livermore, Las Positas College (LPC) is home to nearly 8,000 enrolled students. It began in 1963 as an extension of Chabot College, and by 1988, was designated an independent college. It received full accreditation

in 1991 from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and has been growing its campus and student body since then.

Recently ranked #1 among community colleges in the state and #6 in the nation, the school offers curriculum for students seeking career preparation, transfer to a four-year college or university, or personal enrichment. The campus offers university transfer classes, retraining classes for those in need of employment or career advancement, a first-time educational opportunity for many adults, enrichment classes for those seeking a broader perspective, and career and technical training for those entering the technical and paraprofessional work force. LPC President Dr. Dyrell Foster said the school's top ranking puts a spotlight on its excellent academic programs.

"Our faculty, classified professionals, and administrators strive for excellence, equity, and success in all that we do," he said. "We are happy to be an excellent resource to our students, their families, and the Tri-Valley community as we support students in achieving their educational goals and career aspirations."

Foster said he recognizes the importance of local communication channels. "As the President of Las Positas College, I recognize the invaluable contribution of The Independent news in highlighting the achievements, stories, and aspirations of our students, faculty, and the Livermore community at large, enriching the tapestry of our local landscape," he said.

For more information, call 925-424-1000 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu.

Past Leaders

(continued from pg. 14)

developments proposed for sensitive lands were blocked.

Several expressed moral indignation about trends in society that he believed were discriminatory. He argued in favor of fair housing legislation in Livermore, so that affordable housing could be provided for all. He favored outreach to those who might not be noticed, such as the homeless, farm workers and those with disabilities.

Associate Publisher David Lowell noted, "Bob's talents, his articulate journalistic ability and his courage were vital in helping establish The Independent's position in the community – in the political environment and in the hearts of residents of the Tri-Valley."

Lowell said he remembered the two of them having a quiet talk in their office before the first issue was published. Several said, "I love it here." Lowell explained, "Bob meant the communities and what they represented, and he meant The Independent. His stories and editorial, and his role as editor encouraged the citizens and their governments to act in the best interests of the communities. Nothing altered his focus on what he saw as the best for the Tri-Valley."

Several wrote a story for the Independent's 15th anniversary, focusing on the launching of The Independent. He explained, "(Dana McGaugh) roused me out of my cynicism ... Virtually every other paper I had observed seemed to be cut from the same cloth: fat, safe, commercial ventures, rather than real newspapers willing to go all out for truth and justice... Something leapt to me out the vortex of it all and I knew here was the newspaper where I wanted to be the newspaperman. ... The Independent aimed to be a 'newspaper.' Joan Kinney, the publisher, and David Lowell, the business manager, intended to make it so, as well as McGaugh. That birth edition radiated with something human and fervent."

He continued, "People in the community responded instantly to it. Not everyone, of course, but enough to make us know we had a place in the Valley and a purpose to fulfill."

Gale Marshall

Gale Marshall helped launch The Independent. Though living on a moderate salary from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, he took the risk of investing \$5000 in The Independent, the first area resident to do so.



Gale Marshall

During the year when the paper was in its formative stages, he advised in every area, even helping all night at the press as the first issue emerged, along with Bob Several and Joan Seppala.

An advanced programmer at the lab, he wrote programs for programmers. He was a pioneer in the field, known in particular for writing assemblers, programs close to machine language.

He introduced The Independent to electronic typesetting machines before other area newspapers took advantage of the new technology. Fascinated by a variety of issues, he wrote software for the circulation, sales and business departments. He worked over weekends and sometimes into the night to keep all the equipment running so that the newspaper could make its deadlines. Sales Manager David Lowell said of him, "Gale was a wonderful person with whom to share a career. In all ways, Gale has helped create a rock solid foundation for our newspaper."

David Lowell

David Lowell brought his MBA and professional training to The Independent in his role as manager of advertising sales. However, he was not your usual businessman. His courage and business acumen carried The Independent through a boycott of the paper.



David Lowell

In 1971, before the boycott, Lowell had landed virtually every major grocery, drug and home improvement advertiser in the area -- lucrative ads that he snatched from The Independent's competitors.

A year later, the paper was attacked for its news coverage and editorial support of community leaders who wanted to prevent sprawl development. Citizens filed an initiative that would limit growth to what the environment, school facilities and city government could handle. The air was polluted, schools were on double sessions and the 10% growth rate was fiscally unsustainable for Livermore and Pleasanton city governments.

Residents passed the initiative handily with a 66% vote. However, it was David Lowell, not the rest of the newspaper team, who was out in front engaged in hand-to-hand combat fighting for advertisers and the paper's survival. Because he had a family, the personal risk and sacrifice for him was enormous. Most of The Independent staff were still single.

The Independent was reduced from 68 pages a week on three days down to six pages on one day. With Lowell's leadership in the business community, the paper gradually built back to a sustainable level. Surveys showed that a high percentage of voters trusted The Independent.

Lowell said, "As the first chairman of the Livermore Valley Young Republicans (1965) and later, vice-chairman of the Alameda County Young Republicans, I brought a conservative view to the management of The Independent. From a political perspective, I found the local issues did not align with political parties, but purely what was in the best interest of the citizens in the communities."

He continued, "For example, zoning issues are not Democrat

(continued on pg. 44)

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Past Leaders

(continued from pg. 42)

or Republican issues. Limiting growth so schools are not on double sessions was supported by people of both political persuasions. Saving the vineyards was not a Democratic or Republican issue. Locating Urban Growth Boundaries to preserve the urban center of the community was not a Democrat or Republican issue. In the successful referendums that supported these positions, people from both political parties heavily favored them.”

He concluded, “To spend one’s career with a totally ethical community newspaper, working for the good of all members of the community, is the most I could ever have asked of life. The Independent has played a key role in helping this Valley become what it is today. The path has been extremely challenging and The Independent itself has paid a major price to help this progress.

“We feel even those who opposed us over the years might now appreciate what our Valley has become, and hopefully our role in it”

Bill Owens

On December 9, 1969, Independent photographer Bill Owens shot a picture of the Rolling Stones concert at the Altamont Speedway, shown below. Owens writes, “By noon, the crowd grew to over 300,000. Soon, people were trying to climb on the stage.



Bill Owens

The Hells Angels were acting as security for the concert, and using pool cue sticks to beat people back off the stage. The images I took of the concert were seen around the world.”

Describing his 14 years at The Independent, Owens explains, “The job gave me the opportunity to grow as a photographer and produce the book *Suburbia*. I later received a Guggenheim and published three more monographs. See www.billowens.com.”



Owens’ photo taken during the Rolling Stone’s concert at Altamont Speedway in 1969. (Photo courtesy of Bill Owens)

Janet Armantrout

In 1964, Janet Armantrout started work at The Independent laying out the paper. Later, she was asked to cover stories as well, and in 1988, was promoted to editor, where she served until she died in 2019. She once told Publisher Joan Seppala that people care about The Independent because The Independent cares about them.



Janet Armantrout

Armantrout showed her caring in many ways. She was responsive to those who came in with important news stories, as well as those with smaller ones. Her editorials supported not only the good works and good ideas of community agencies and institutions, but also those of individuals who deserved recognition.

On one occasion, Seppala questioned whether abandoned dogs, cats and rabbits should have their pictures and captioned story appear on the front page every week. Armantrout pointed out that the Pet of the Week notice with its invitation to adopt an animal in need was the best read article in the paper. Thinking more about it, Seppala came to realize the stories were emblematic of the caring Armantrout brought to all in the community. They express the paper’s deepest values, its underlying strength.

One of Armantrout’s trademarks was her objectivity and fairness. Armantrout was known for listening to all sides and giving a balanced point of view. She helped Seppala keep the paper objective. Seppala is involved in many issues on a grass roots level. She counted on Armantrout to tell her, “No,” when Seppala came in with too many stories on the same issue.

Associate Publisher David Lowell noted the completeness of The Independent’s coverage under Armantrout. Her encyclopedic knowledge of the area after living and working in the Valley for 55 years gave depth to her coverage. In addition, she was meticulously accurate in reporting the facts.

Seppala summed up Armantrout’s history at the paper. “Janet’s gentle manner belies a moral and intellectual power that still guides The Independent.”

Ron McNicoll

Ron started his career as a reporter with The Independent in the mid-1960s. He later went to work for the Alameda Sun and the Contra Costa Times before returning to The Independent in 1996 to report on local and county agencies, school districts and city government. During his time covering the Zone 7 Water Agency, he dug into important water resource issues. He had a strong ability to investigate state water policy to gain a thorough understanding of how legislation would impact the Tri-Valley.

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INDEPENDENT ROOTS
(continued from pg. 12)

The paper's editorial endorsements backed the residentialist party, which eventually gained a majority on the Livermore City Council, and one person on the Pleasanton City Council.

Also at the grassroots level, there was serious and persistent reporting on social issues. For instance, discrimination against minority youths at the Camp Parks Jobs Corps in the late 1960s. The Livermore community's creation of a group to deal with that discrimination was covered extensively.

On the financial side, the publisher gave free advertising space to the local office of the War on Poverty for its client job listings and other needs.

Editor Bob Several addressed the social equity issue personally. He developed a good rapport with people in the

Hispanic community. The paper promoted its Folklorio group and its other endeavors.

The Independent led a legal tussle between the Pleasanton Housing Authority and War on Poverty attorney Dan Price, who insisted that legally the Komandorski Village housing near Camp Parks could be opened to civilians, not just soldiers.

The Independent's coverage of the issue led to the Pleasanton City Council replacing personnel on the housing authority board to clear the way for a more cooperative attitude to house low-income civilians, as well as the military.

The Independent's grassroots approach was even seen in the way reporters made a crucial decision about

layoffs. The Independent lost the majority of its advertising in 1973 because of a boycott triggered by the newspaper's support of the SAVE (Save All Valley Environments) initiative.

As a result, The Independent had to reduce 40% of its editorial expenses. Most newspaper publishers simply would have told their editors to lay off 40% of the staff, which in The Independent's case would have been two of the five reporters. But Seppala gave the power over the decision to the reporters themselves. After a long discussion, they all signed on to retaining a full staff and taking a pay cut. Reporters did not want to weaken the paper by reducing its coverage. It was also a show of support for each other; they wanted no one to be left without a paycheck.

ROBERT FRANK
(continued from pg. 34)

2002 — Campaigned for the North Livermore Urban Growth Boundary Initiative, which was adopted after more than 10,000 signatures were collected.

2005-06 — Fought Pardee Homes' attempt to break the North Livermore UBG by building a town of 2,450 units and 25,000 people, under county control, in Las Positas Valley. Livermore voters defeated the proposal.

2004-2007 — Seppala served on a committee to revitalize and redevelop downtown Livermore. One of the major obstacles was State Highway 84 cutting through downtown Livermore on First Street. The Independent campaigned to move the highway off of First Street.

2007 — The Bankhead Theater, with a downtown plaza and park, was built, marking the culmination of 44 years of Seppala and the Independent's local support for the arts and a people-friendly downtown.

The importance of having a media voice that is embedded in and genuinely cares for the community cannot be overlooked. Publisher S.I. Newhouse, of the Staten Island Advance, got the Staten Island Bridge built. Santa Barbara News Press founder Thomas Moore Storke championed the city's Mediterranean motif, the building of Lake Cachuma reservoir and UCSB. And he exposed the character assassinations and other chicanery of the John Birch Society.

And recently, we saw in a small community in Kansas how a local paper's news gathering triggered collusion between police and a local businesswoman. She was so threatened by information that the paper had collected — and had already decided against publishing — that an unconstitutional raid on the newspaper's office was conducted by the town's entire police force. Stress from the raid led to the death of the Marion County Record's 98-year-old owner, Joan Meyer.

Following the raid, the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is-

sued a statement condemning the action on Aug. 13. It was co-signed by more than 30 news organizations and allied groups, including the Associated Press, Bloomberg, Gannett, New York Times, NBC, The New Yorker, Reuters and the Washington Post.

Alden Capital's Digital First Media did not sign — despite being the second-largest owner of newspapers in the nation, including most that remain in the greater Bay Area.

Seppala, now 84, continues her commitment to help guide the Tri-Valley into a future that respects and upholds its community values. In an age where local news often falls victim to profit-driven motives, Seppala and The Independent stand as exemplars of what journalism, at its core, aims to be — a voice for the people, a watchdog for democracy, and a force for positive change. The Independent is a living testament to the vital role that committed journalism plays in shaping, safeguarding, and celebrating a community.

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