



Community members gather in a demonstration at Portola Park in Livermore on Saturday, Oct. 17, for the Tri-Valley's "No Kings: Vote Early" rally. Organized by Livermore Indivisible, the event drew an estimated 1,000 participants to advocate for voting rights, encourage early voting and participate in a voter education-fair featuring guest speakers and community activities. (Photo — May Fraser)

LLNL Computer Simulations Explore Protection of Earth from Asteroids

Disruption and Deflection of Asteroids Aim to Save Planet Earth

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — The question of how to defend Earth against a colliding asteroid recently LLNL scientists conducted super-computer simulations of how a nuclear device might fragment an incoming asteroid so that no remaining piece poses a significant threat to the planet, a strategy known as disruption, according to an Oct. 13 LLNL announcement. “Our simulations suggest that disruption remains a realistic option for asteroids of this size (160 meters across) or smaller,” Isaiah Santistevan, LLNL researcher and the project’s principal investigator, told The Independent. “However,

additional modeling is needed to better understand how the fragments evolve over time and ensure that the remaining fragments are smaller than approximately 10 meters, a size at which Earth’s atmosphere can provide protection.” The majority of asteroids — the small, rocky remnants of our solar system’s formation — orbit the sun in the main asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. But some share an orbit with Earth, posing a potential collision threat if they come too close. NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory manages the Center for Near Earth Object Studies, which tracks and predicts the paths of near-earth asteroids. According to its Sentry

system, astronomers have identified 35 asteroids with a greater than one-in-a-million chance of hitting earth within the next 100 years. The current highest impact-probability asteroid, known as 2010 RF12, has a 10% chance of impact in September 2095, although its small size would likely limit its effects to minor and localized structural damages. Astronomers discovered the asteroid in 2010 five days before its close approach that year. Depending on the amount of lead time between an asteroid’s discovery and its impact, humans may have several options to avert a destructive asteroid. In addition to the disruption strategy modeled

(See ASTEROIDS, page 12)

Why California Healthcare Workers And Clinic Boards Clash Over Prop. 44

Patient Groups Endorse Ballot Measure; Physicans, Medical Executives Oppose It

By Jessica Zimmer

TRI-VALLEY—A statewide union of healthcare workers, patients, and consumers, and the boards of community health clinics, stand on opposite sides of Proposition 44, the Clinic Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Although the legislation’s ultimate impact remains unclear, a passing vote would require the California Attorney General to issue binding guidance clarifying two key economic figures for clinics: total revenue and total program spending. The legislation reached the Nov. 3 general ballot because Service Employees International Union - United

Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW) gathered 546,651 signatures. Representing over 120,000 healthcare workers and consumers, the union is backed by the California Federation of Labor Unions (AFL-CIO). Renée Saldaña, press secretary for SEIU-UHW, said due to federal funding cuts enacted through HR 1, California will lose up to \$30 billion in health care funding in 2027. “We started a grassroots effort to counter this massive crisis coming to the state’s healthcare system. We expect longer waits and fewer services.” The community clinics affected by the bill are nonprofit organizations called federally qualified health cen-

ters (FQHCs). These centers provide primary, dental, and behavioral health care in California’s medically underserved communities. Federal law requires these centers to see every patient, regardless of ability to pay, charging low-income patients on a sliding scale. Axis Community Health is the FQHC serving the Tri-Valley and southern Contra Costa County. The organization cares for more than 15,700 patients a year at clinics in Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton. FQHCs are partly funded by federal grants. There is strict federal and state oversight over these centers. Saldaña said SEIU-UHW authored

(See PROP 44, page 14)

The Livermore Valley Named the American Wine Region of Year

Wine Enthusiast Notes Authenticity and 180-Year Story

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE—As the Livermore Valley Wine Community kicked off its annual four-day TASTE celebration of food, wine and harvest on Thursday, Oct. 15, it learned of one more reason to raise a glass. Livermore Valley has been named Wine Enthusiast’s 2026 Wine Star Award American Wine Region of the Year. The win elevates the region’s profile among international importers, sommeliers and wine lovers worldwide. The good news buzzed around the opening event, Taste Our Terroir, held this year at the Concannon Vineyard Event Center, bringing together 20 winery and restaurant teams for an evening of tasting and friendly

competition. As one of California’s oldest wine regions, Livermore Valley dates back to the 1760s with Spanish missionaries, later anchored by pioneers like Wentle Vineyards and Concannon Vineyard in the 1880s. Brandi Lombardi, executive director of the Livermore Valley Wine Community was the first to receive and break the news. “This is a significant moment for Livermore Valley,” she said. “Our region has been deeply focused on raising the quality of our wines, while staying true to who we are as a community.” The honor reflects a sustained, collaborative effort to elevate wine quality across the valley’s approximately 50

(See AWARD, page 10)



Winemakers, owners and leaders raise a glass at the Concannon Vineyard Event Center in Livermore on Thursday, Oct. 15, to toast Livermore Valley’s historic recognition as Wine Enthusiast’s 2026 American Wine Region of the Year. (Photo courtesy of Livermore Valley Wine Community)

Doolan Canyon, Springtown Parcels Enter Conservation

331 Acres of Protected Wildlife and Open Space Kept

By David Jen

TRI-VALLEY — Two new conservation easements have preserved 331 more acres of open space in Doolan Canyon and Springtown Preserve, the Tri-Valley Conservancy (TVC) announced Oct. 15. “TVC is proud to add these open space lands to our more than 6,500 areas of protected lands in the Tri-Valley region,” TVC Executive Director Rebecca Spector said. “These lands are home to special species, including California tiger salamanders and western burrowing owls, and connect larger habitat areas ensuring wildlife can travel safely across the region.” A 131-acre parcel in Doolan Canyon adds to 1,346 acres of existing easements there, forming a swath of open space between Dublin and Livermore to serve as a corridor for wildlife, including

the threatened California tiger salamander and the California red-legged frog. The new easement lies about half a mile from the Doolan Canyon Regional Preserve, which the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) began considering for public access in April. Toward that end, EBRPD bought 4.5 acres of adjacent land from the City of Livermore in June to possibly serve as a staging area and the first segment of a public trail. The park district plans to host guided tours of the potential park in 2027 on April 7 and May 9. In Springtown, the new 200-acre easement adds to an existing 40-acre preserve to protect North Livermore’s alkali wetlands — specialized habitats characterized by high concentrations of salts and minerals dissolved in shallow water. The area hosts the

(See CONSERVATION, page 12)



Sister Rebecca Shinas stands with one of her original paintings at the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose Motherhouse in Fremont. Her upcoming exhibit, "Spiritual Art from the Heart," will feature more than 50 works of oil and acrylic paintings and prints accompanied by her original music. It will be held on Nov. 14-15 at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Livermore. (Photo courtesy of Sister Rebecca Shinas)

Nun Brings ‘Spiritual Art from the Heart’

St. Charles Borromeo Parish Exhibition Features Her Paintings, Prints and Songs

By David Scholz

LIVERMORE — After more than 50 years of painting, Sister Rebecca Shinas, OP, does not merely paint to create paintings. Rather, it’s more about letting something new emerge that is ready to become visible. Those expressions of her inner being come together in an upcoming exhibit of over 50 original oil and acrylic paintings and prints entitled “Spiritual Art from the Heart” the weekend of Nov. 14-

15 (1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday) at St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 1315 Lomitas Ave. in Livermore. “Sometimes it is joy, sometimes healing, sometimes beauty, sometimes a question, sometimes simply love,” Sister Rebecca said. “Every canvas holds a little piece of my life and Spirit, but once someone stands before it, it is no longer only my story — it becomes theirs, too. That is the wonder of art for me.” Sister Rebecca, 75, a mem-

ber of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, has found joy in art since her youth growing up in Carlsbad and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Celebrating 45 years of vowed religious life, she has found the essence of God in art as well as music. Her home and art studio are in the convent at the order’s Motherhouse in Fremont, California. “To me God is love,” Sister Rebecca said. “I see God and live God.” More than anything, she hopes

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PET OF THE WEEK



TIGER

Tiger is a five-month-old jungle cat on the prowl for a den of his own! He’s a social star with his Kitty City crew, but with humans, he’s more of a stealthy explorer who likes to scout out the terrain before he pounces into your heart. Give him a quiet hideout and a little patience, and this little tiger will show you his true stripes. Visit valleyhumane.org, call (925) 426-8656 or email info@valleyhumane.org to start the adoption process today.

Invasive Mussels Found in Lake Del Valle

By Dawnmarie Fehr

LIVERMORE—Invasive golden mussels were found in Livermore’s Lake Del Valle last month, prompting officials to classify the lake as “infested,” and implement new boating restrictions.

According to officials from the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) — which operates the lake — boaters who launch at Lake Del Valle will be subject to a 30-day quarantine before their watercraft may be permitted at any other waterbody managed by the park district.

“Boats that launch exclusively at Lake Del Valle and return with an intact Del Valle boat band will not be subject to the quarantine,” said Del Valle’s park operations unit manager Seleney Sanchez. “Other agencies that manage waterbodies elsewhere in the Bay Area and beyond may impose their own quarantine requirements, so boaters should check the websites of

respective managing agencies for current rules.”

Lake Del Valle is the latest in a series of sightings that began in the Port of Stockton in October 2024, the first time the troublesome bivalves were found in North America. They were likely brought in through ballast water discharged by an international ocean-going vessel. Since then, golden mussels have been found across the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, from Stockton to Martinez, and as far south in California as San Diego County.

EBRPD spokesperson Jen Vanya said the mussels probably traveled to Lake Del Valle through aqueducts from the Delta. The lake is operated as part of the state water project by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to provide flood protection and drinking water for local water agencies. The South Bay aqueduct transfers water from Bethany Reservoir to Lake Del Valle.

“The invasive golden mussel was found in Beth-

any Reservoir in December of 2024,” Vanya said. “The golden mussels in Lake Del Valle likely entered the lake during a routine water delivery in 2025 or early 2026.”

According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the mussels are native to East and Southeast Asia and pose a “significant threat” to California’s natural ecosystems, water infrastructure, agriculture and economy. The invasive species has already caused major disruptions in other parts of the world, including heavy biofouling of water intake systems, and negative impacts to habitat and wildlife.

California’s water systems are now facing similar threats. CDFW spokesperson Krysten Kellum said the mussels will grow on virtually any surface — piers, boats, pumps, aquatic vegetation, flood gates and more.

Golden mussels are small — usually less than two inches — and dark yellow to golden brown in

color. The mussels spread rapidly by attaching themselves to hard surfaces and releasing microscopic larvae that drift in the water. Golden mussels thrive in fresh or brackish waters and can tolerate a temperature range of 41 to 95 degrees. Kellum said researchers are studying the mussels to find out how much salinity they can tolerate in their habitats.

The mussels compromise local ecosystems by usurping the food supply and consuming all the microscopic zooplankton and photo plankton, leaving none for native species.

Boaters launching at Del Valle will be subject to inspection for the presence of invasive mussels, at the cost of \$5-\$10, depending on the vessel. Vanya said fees help partially offset the cost of the inspection program. Inspections are also required at other EBRPD waterbodies, including Lake Chabot and Shadow Cliffs.

Researchers from the CDFW, various water boards, and the Department of Water Resources are working together to find ways to mitigate and eradicate the mussels to protect native species and infrastructure. So far, a solution has not been found. Officials are working to control the spread as much as possible until a way to eradicate the invasive mussels has been found.

To help mitigate the spread of the mussels, the public has been asked to ensure they “clean, drain and dry” all water vessels and accessories, from boats, wave runners and paddle boards to life jackets, clothing and paddles. Even mountain bikers and hikers are warned to check their shoes and tires if they’ve come in contact with water. The golden mussel larvae are very small, with a tena-

cious grip, allowing them to cling to almost anything they encounter.

For more information, a live look at where mussels have been found, or to report a sighting, visit www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/Species/Golden-Mussel.

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Instructors and student leaders from Team Martial Arts show off their creative costumes at a past Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day in downtown Livermore. Team Martial Arts will return for another year of games and candy when the popular community tradition comes back to downtown on Saturday, Oct. 24. (Photo courtesy of Team Martial Arts) See story on page 14.

Fire Department Slated to Offer Emergency Preparedness Class

DUBLIN — The Alameda County Fire Department will host a free Personal Emergency Preparedness class at the Dublin Civic Center, 100 Civic Plaza,

from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 22.

Offered in conjunction with the city, the class will cover how to minimize hazards in the home, what to in-

clude in a disaster kit, how to create a family communication plan, and how to manage utilities after an earthquake.

To register, go to tinyurl.com/ysmjrae7.

Patelco Credit Union Receives Top Trade Association Awards

DUBLIN — Patelco Credit Union recently received two national awards from the Marketing Association of Credit Unions (MAC), a nonprofit trade association.

The Dublin-based credit union, with more than 550,000 members and nearly \$10 billion in assets, received a Gold Award in the 2026 MAC Awards Financial Wellness category for initiatives addressing financial education, expert guidance, hardship resources, community partnerships and member communication.

Patelco also received a Bronze Award in the Shoe-string Superstar category for its podcast, “Small Talks for Big Change,” which the credit union said was created to cut through financial complexity and give listeners clear, practical guidance they can use in everyday life.

“This recognition is a powerful affirmation of what Patelco stands for: making sure members have the right programs, services and support available to them when they need us most,” said Patelco President and CEO Erin Mendez.

Patelco said its gold-winning financial wellness initiative brought together programs to address the core areas of financial education, expert guidance, hardship resources, community partnerships and member communication.

The initiative was de-

signed to respond to real financial pressures facing Patelco members, including rising living costs, layoffs and unemployment, fraud and elder financial abuse, according to the credit union.

“Financial wellness isn’t an initiative on the sidelines of our business,” Mendez said. “It is central to our mission and embedded in how we serve.”

“Whether we’re helping a member through financial

hardship, providing trusted guidance or bringing practical education to hundreds of thousands of members, our goal is to create meaningful change that people can feel in their lives,” Mendez added. “I could not be prouder of our team for turning that commitment into measurable impact.”

Both awards were presented in the \$2 billion-plus asset category.

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DOUBLE YOUR FUN THIS HALLOWEEN!

Start the day in Downtown Livermore, then join us for treats at Heritage Estates!

Saturday, October 24th

10AM to 1PM | Hay Day at Carnegie Park

Kick off the spooky celebrations at the Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day in Historic Downtown. This free, family-friendly tradition includes a costume contest, live music, and games at downtown businesses and throughout Carnegie Park.

2PM to 4PM | Trick-or-Treating at Heritage Estates

Then, keep the excitement going with Trick-or-Treating at Heritage Estates Senior Apartments. Come in your silliest or scariest costume – we'll provide the candy! Kids of all ages are welcome.

Check in at the 800 office to join the fun. Make it a full day of Halloween fun!

Parking will be limited. Please park at Leslie's Pool Supplies and walk over



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Congratulations

2026 Nobel Prize Laureate
in Physiology or Medicine

Karl Deisseroth, MD, PhD





We congratulate Karl Deisseroth, MD, PhD, a Stanford professor of bioengineering and of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, on winning the 2026 Nobel Prize for his work in optogenetics. Today, thousands of scientists worldwide use optogenetics to deepen our understanding of the brain and develop new therapies for neurological and psychiatric disorders. Dr. Deisseroth’s groundbreaking work embodies Stanford’s mission to advance knowledge and improve lives for patients and families everywhere.

EDITORIAL

Re-elect Ben Barrientos to the Livermore City Council

Ben Barrientos, a retired educator, has represented Livermore’s District 2 since 2022. He has been involved in numerous city projects, and is seeking a second term in order to see some of them through to completion.

Those projects include installing flashing beacons for pedestrians near Christensen Middle School, improving I-580 overpasses, planning a park with community gardens in Springtownand downtown improvements.

He also took a stand against the Garaventa Hills housing development,

casting the lone dissenting vote in November 2024. The project was ultimately shrunk from 140 units to 40, which he considers a success.

Barrientos’s experience on the council is a positive, and his vote against Garaventa Hills shows where he stands

on protecting open space in and around Livermore. Ben Barrientos deserves a second term to ensure that development interests won’t outweigh maintaining the Urban Growth Boundary, which he officially supports, andprotecting the vistas that make the Tri-Valley unique.

The Independent Endorses Julie Testa for Pleasanton Mayor

Pleasanton Mayor Jack Balch secured the mayor’s seat two years ago. He won the election in 2024 largely because of his opposition to raising the city sales tax by one-half of 1%to fix the city’s budget deficit, arguing savings could be had elsewhere. The increase would have cost Pleasanton residents an estimated average of \$79 a year bringing in \$10 million annually.

Since then, Pleasanton has cut services and transferred funds from the city’s pension and retiree funds to balance the budget. Balch also voted to streamline permitting for businesses, updating impact fees and reducing planning requirements for some smaller homeowner projects.

Two-term councilmember Julie Testa is running for mayor. She was an advocate for the city’s failed sales tax increase in 2024. She opposed spending money on an external study that only confirmed staff projections of increasing deficits over the next 10 years. She also opposed the use of city retirement funds to balance the budget, and has tried to bring a modest additionalsales tax back to the council for discussion.

Testa drove the creation of Pleasanton’s Alternate Response Unit as well, which incorporated mental health pro-

fessionals with police on emergency calls responding to health crises.

Unlike Balch, Testa states that she has refused donations or endorsements "from special or financial interests from anyone who expects something in return.” She supports the city’s Urban Growth Boundary. Balch has not done so.

We’re concerned that Balch is not independent enough from real estate development and commercial building interests that would put development first, to the detriment of protection of the city’s environment and its growth boundary. Balch works for his family’s business, Balch Enterprises, which de-

scribes itself as a full-service developer, builder and property manager. And while the city’s finances were stabilized one year due to service cuts, that’s not a viable strategy for the future, and there are still more costs to come addressing critical needs amounting to \$14.3 million in the next three years and \$61 million within the next 10 years.

Testa has stated, “I will stand up for Pleasanton. I will fight for responsible growth, genuine affordability, fiscal accountability, and the right of citizens to shape their community.”

For these reasons, The Independent endorses Julie Testa for mayor.

Voters Should Elect Reena Gupta to Pleasanton City Council

Two candidates are competing for the city council seat representing District 3, which is being vacated by councilmember Julie Testa. She is termed out and running for mayor.

Reena Gupta is a small business entrepreneur and the founder of the Mom Relaunch Foundation, and has contributed work to the Economic Vitality Committee, the Rotary Club, Leadership Pleasanton, and serves as a Pleasanton Connects ambassador, on the advisory boards of the Pleasanton Unified School District, Three Valleys Community Foundation, and with the Tri-Valley Career Center.

She wants to see the city become more cooperative with businesses, while also preserving the city’s Urban Growth Boundary. She has proactively helped residents send feedback to the City Council on agenda items.

Also running is former Pleasanton Unified School District trustee Jamie

Yee.She wants to focus on issues of governance and look for opportunities to expand housing stock within the city’s Urban Growth Boundary.

Gupta’s numerous community activities and business savvy make her the best option.

For Pleasanton’s District 1, Vin Kruttiventi is the Better Choice

Two candidates are running for the open seat in District 1 on the Pleasanton City Council. It is currently held by Jeff Nibert, who is not seeking reelection. One is former city councilmember Kathy Narum, who left the council in 2022 after two terms and is currently a director of the Zone 7 Water Agency. The other is local entrepreneur Vin Kruttiventi, who previously challenged former U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell for Congress,

finding more sources of revenue for the city, including drawing in new businesses to fill vacant commercial spaces, and bringing new life to the Stoneridge Shopping Center.

Both candidates have their strengths, but what Pleasanton needs more than

anything are fresh ideas to help solve its endemic financial problems. Kruttiventi’s experience in business operations and fiscal management would be an asset on the council. We do think that he’s the better choice.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:

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

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

A Question of Civil Liberties and Public Spending

Dawn Wantroba, Livermore

Livermore, did you know that the Livermore Police currently operate 148 ALPR cameras, 75 of which are Flock devices? The city quietly placed these cameras all around our city without telling us or asking us. I recently sent an email to every city council member and after three weeks of not hearing back from a single one (shame on them!), I forwarded that email one more time this past week and finally heard back from just one person—the mayor. He decided to

chastise me and tell me that I should stop watching shows like "Chicago, P.D." He also said that a greater concern is how we are tracked by using our cell phones and how I should be more upset about that fact. The thing is that cell phone data is not automatically funneled into a national law enforcement network. Flock data is shared across wide networks, and systems installed for one purpose, often to expand over time into broader tracking. Comparing a personal cell phone to a government managed surveillance network misses a fundamental point: I choose whether to carry a

phone, and I can turn it off. I cannot turn off public street cameras, nor did I consent to having my daily movements logged and stored in a searchable database. Because these automated license plate readers track innocent citizens who have committed no crime, this is a MAJOR question of civil liberties and public spending. Mayor Marchand, if you truly believe the community wants these cameras, let the people have a voice and vote on it!

Dental Health Crisis

Ayan Banerjee, Pleasanton

Five years ago, a FaceTime call with my grandfather, my "Dadu," changed how I look at healthcare. I noticed he wasn't wearing his dentures. He admitted he lost his old set, but didn't want to burden my father with the out-of-pocket cost of a replacement. As a seventh-grader, I assumed his medical insurance covered it. I was wrong; dental care was completely excluded.

That memory stuck with me. Years later, while volunteering at Pleasanton’s senior center, I heard identical stories from our city’s older residents. And the neglect fueled me to act. I joined the Magic Tooth Bus mobile clinic and quickly realized the crisis wasn't affecting only seniors—families of all backgrounds lacked a predictable place for checkups. Without a clinical license, I focused on administrative red tape, spending a summer building a database of Bay Area clinics accepting Medi-Cal.

A year ago, I brought this work home to the East Bay by creating the foundation Mind Your Molars. My father and I run neighborhood drives to collect dental supplies across 100 to 150 homes at a time. At community health fairs, we use a tri-fold display to offer step-by-step instructions on navigating Medi-Cal and understanding legal rights within Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs).

While my grandfather has passed away, the burden he carried remains for countless local families. By battling these neighborhood problems through community efforts, we can end the ignorance of dental health.

Legacy Lost

Hasan Hasan, Livermore

I recently heard a community leader share her goal of ‘building something that will outlive me’, and it’s what each leader needs to remember. One day we will be gone and what was built will remain. We see it all over; buildings that still remain beautiful and well-designed, and others that seem misplaced, and strongly displeasing.

If something is built in the Downtown Center to get accolades, but ultimately harms the community indefinitely, unfortunately, the legacy of those that made the project happen will be ongoing shame.

Sympathy

Richard Andrews, Livermore

There has been much news lately about Christa Pike and her botched execution. Much sympathy and outcry have been given to her cause. Sorry, I am NOT one of those.

I am a lifelong liberal who believes in the death penalty. I have a number of reasons, but justice for the victims is at the top. There have been many racially motivated executions in the past, which is horrid. But a corrected system instituting rigorous oversight is the answer, not letting bad people live while their victims are gone. Read what she did, and tell me that she deserves less than her sentence.

The methodology that is applied to the execution is badly flawed and the far-left needs to listen to what they whine about. There are many "humane" ways to cause demise without all the rig amoral we citizens are forced to pay for. Painless removal with oral overdoses works, and costs a lot less. Ask anyone who has been knocked unconscious how much pain they remember. Zero.

We need to bring the Death penalty back in a carefully administered manner that prevents the stupidity of actions in the past. However, this does not permit the perpetrator to breathe free air while their victim and their families live with the suffering of their act. Those victims and their families suffer "cruel and unusual punishment" as the 8th Amendment prohibits, by letting the bad one live on. It is a reversal of thought we need to apply. The 8th must also protect victims.

A More Thoughtful Balance

Christine Hughes, Livermore

The Livermore Community Coalition should get praise for having the best interest of our community in mind! The comprehensive vision—which includes an expansive wooded park, a boutique four-star hotel, and relocated affordable housing units—strikes a more thoughtful balance for the Tri-Valley area than existing city plans. Thank you for being a force for good in the Tri-Valley! If only the people we have elected in office would do the same!

What's Going On in Dublin?

Mike Grant, Dublin

As a long-term Dublin resident, I believe we should expect honesty, transparency, and accountability from our elected officials. Recent information involving Mayor Sherry Hu and a local development project has raised some questions that I believe deserve answers.

In May 2022, the Dublin City Council approved the Inspiration Drive memory care development. Sherry Hu, then a councilmember, voted in favor of the project.

Recently, a social media post from January 2025 began circulating, raising some interesting questions. The post, appearing under Hu's name, promoted an investment opportunity involving the same development. It sought approximately \$3.8 million from investors and advertised a projected 21% annualized return.

What surprised me even more was a filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

An April 4, 2025, SEC filing by Selina Kyle LLC identifies Sherry Hu as an executive officer and co-manager of the company. The filing also reports approximately \$3.745 million raised from 26 investors.

This made me wonder about the mayor's financial or business relationship with the development.

California requires elected officials to file Statements of Economic Interests (Form 700) to disclose certain financial interests and business relationships. However, a review of Hu's 2025 filings did not appear to identify Selina Kyle LLC or her reported management position.

Perhaps there is a reasonable explanation, but shouldn't residents be entitled to know?

When did the mayor become involved with this company? What exactly is her role? Was this business relationship required to be disclosed? And were any potential conflicts of interest properly addressed?

I am not suggesting that any laws were broken, nor is there evidence presented here that Hu had a financial interest when she voted on the project in 2022.

Still, I believe these are fair questions.

I hope the mayor can give clarification.

New Proposed Livermore Downtown Plan 2026

Yolanda Meider, Livermore

PLEASE look up and read the new proposed conceptual plan at livermorecommunitycoalition-speaks.com.

1. It is a well thought out organized revised design.

2. Moving the Arts and Science building to a better location next to the Bankhead Theater.

3. Moving the majority of Eden Housing across the street allowing for a much needed 4-star hotel and expanding the open space park allowing a great flowing connection from the 4-star hotel to the Bankhead Theater.

4. The developer for the 4-star hotel is open to building.

5. The new City Council and mayor need to reconsider this revised beautiful option and meet with the hotel developer and the Community Coalition Group.

6. Do not destroy the fantastic open lot with Eden Housing and a park, which will become a park for Eden Housing and not for the citizens of Livermore.

7.The City of Livermore needs to relocate Eden Housing and consider the newer proposed design for the citizens, wineries and businesses. This new proposed conceptual plan would be a great asset for Livermore.

Phase Lock Window: Generative Artificial Intelligence and Optics

Greg Scott, Livermore

“The intuitions our species built over millennia, at the slow pace of generations, are coming apart at a dizzying speed.” (Saturnin Pug-

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

THE *Independent*

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The City of Livermore’s Poet Laureate program has made available for public viewing a collection of commemorative poems written during the first 20 years of the initiative. “Twenty Years of Verse” contains the history of the poet laureate program, photos of local artwork and 25 poems commemorating regional art and civic events. Five poets laureate emeriti contributed to the project: Connie Post, Charan Wollard, Kevin Gunn, Cynthia Patton and Peggy Schimmelman. The book may be checked out or reserved for viewing at the Civic Center Library. (Photo courtesy of the City of Livermore)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

net, “Phase Lock: A manifesto on brain-computer interfaces and preserving human agency in the age of [Generative] AI,” 2026)

An optically pumped magnetometer (OPM) is one technology that enables magnetoencephalography (MEG). MEG records changes in magnetic fields from the activity in structural neural areas of the brain. MEG, a non-invasive technology, has advantages over electroencephalography (EEG) in having millisecond (one-thousandth of a second) temporal resolution and 2 to 5 millimeter spatial resolution (location), without having the signal distortions of EEG caused by varying conductances from skull anatomy. In other words, OPM-MEG allows recording of brain neural activity as never before.

Phase lock is: “In neuroscience, the spontaneous alignment of firing neurons to an outside stimulus.” (Pugnet, ibid.)

We are currently in a closing phase lock window, which is to say the era that humans maintain control of their own brains versus human brains being artificially controlled is being decided relatively soon – likely in the next decade.

“Either we align [Generative] AI or we get left behind. There

are two ways to do that: alignment-by-control, which constrains the machine from the outside, and alignment-by-integration, which couples human values and intents to the machine directly. Control can hold for the next few years, but ultimately, only integration will last.” (Pugnet, ibid.)

We already have brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) through functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), though OPM-MEG and optogenetics are superior technologies and possibilities. Research also points to neural read-write capabilities through quantum magnetic effects on the energy production compartments, the mitochondria, in most nucleated cells.

Pugnet’s thinking is that we are going to have alignment-by-integration through BCIs, or Generative AI is going to dominate or even destroy most, or all, of humanity.

No Hotel for Downtown Livermore

Doug Mann, Livermore

Citizens for Balanced Growth has finished our investigation into the development of a Livermore downtown hotel. Bottom line—there is no longer a developer.

Eleven years of planning and

outreach have achieved something though. A single person with two shell companies now owns the very valuable downtown real estate which was once under the control of the City. The eventual use of these parcels may be anyone’s guess. Typically, landowners pursue another path when “Plan A” fails. More apartment towers? Retail? Miniature golf? Who can say, but at least for now it’s a perfectly good parking lot.

This month we met with additional senior staff in person, including senior planners and a long employed high level manager. None of them could identify any ongoing progress or activity. There is no one left for us to ask.

Our investigation also included a direct public outreach component. A 2017 survey revealed that a hotel was desirable, with virtually no opposition. That opinion is no longer as universal. The primary reason for this shift seems to be the controversy in 2022 where the on-site parking was eliminated and a parking lot around the corner and down the street was established. The negative impact on traffic circulation is unwelcome. People expect a hotel to have parking, and some no longer want a hotel for that reason.

No one knows if a future hotel developer will decide to actually build a hotel in the entitled space. One can always hope, but we can’t envision any remedy to the physical and economic challenges of the Council’s chosen site for such a use. With redevelopment complete, Livermore will get the apartment buildings, but we won’t get a hotel.

(This letter was composed and approved by the board of directors of Citizens for Balanced Growth.)

Springtown Community Park Steven Spedowski, Livermore

Every time I drive past Springtown Community Park, I’m reminded of one of the proudest moments of my public service.

In 2017, I had the honor of serving on the Livermore City Council as its only member from North Livermore. When the council approved the conversion of the struggling municipal golf course into a community park, I felt the weight and the privilege of representing the neighborhood that would call that park home.

The decision didn’t come easily, and it didn’t come from any one per-

son. Over many months, the council held public forums where residents shared their hopes for the land. Families asked for play spaces. Seniors asked for walking paths. Neighbors who had watched the golf course decline asked for something the whole community could use. City staff listened, refined the plans, and brought back designs that reflected what they heard. The final vote was the product of that shared effort.

I remember sitting on the dais knowing that North Livermore had a voice in that room. Our side of town is often overlooked, and being able to speak for my neighbors at that moment meant a great deal to me. It still does.

Today, when I see construction of the park progress, I don’t think of any single name attached to it. I think of the residents who showed up to those forums, the staff who did the hard work, and the colleagues who voted to make it happen. That’s how good things get built in Livermore: together.

I’m grateful to have been part of it.

(Steven Spedowski is a former Livermore Councilmember.)

Eden Should Help the Needy Theodore Schaefer, Livermore

For years, I have seen an old lady pushing her worldly goods around in a shopping basket, up and down First Street. I’m sure the police know her. Eden Housing has net assets of over \$440 million, pays their CEO almost \$700,00/year and is getting \$100million to build luxury, new apartments for low income in downtown Livermore at an average \$770,000 each from our taxpayer bond expense, to be paid back over a long 55 years at 3%, not 7%+. They should be forced to devote 10% of these units to the destitute homeless like her.

It’s about time Eden did this for a few truly needy local Livermore old people before opening eligibility for these incredible apartments to the whole Bay area from Oakland to Manteca.

Your Vote Shapes Our Future Glenn Stewart, Livermore

As election day approaches on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2026, residents across Livermore have the opportunity and responsibility to shape our community’s future.

Voting is a fundamental right and one of the most effective ways

to make your voice heard on issues that directly impact our daily lives. From federal representation to state initiatives and local measures that influence our schools, public safety, infrastructure, and municipal policies, every vote helps determine the direction of our local and broader communities.

With multiple options available for casting a ballot, voting early is particularly advantageous. Voting early helps ensure that unexpected schedule conflicts, personal emergencies, work obligations, or longer lines on Election Day do not prevent your voice from being counted. Additionally, voting ahead of time allows you to thoroughly review candidate platforms and local ballot measures at your own pace, ensuring a well-informed choice.

Whether you plan to submit a vote-by-mail ballot, utilize an official drop box, or visit a local vote center in Alameda County ahead of Election Day, taking action early ensures your participation is secure and hassle-free.

No matter your political background or perspectives on individual ballot items, active participation strengthens our democratic process. Make a plan to cast your ballot early

and ensure your voice is included in shaping our collective future.

Response to Editorial on Melissa Hernandez Chet Patel, Livermore

I am writing to express my disappointment regarding your recent editorial stating that “Melissa Hernandez shows she is unfit to hold office.”

As an independent newspaper, your publication is held to high standards of objective journalism by its readers. In addressing Melissa Hernandez’s recent comments regarding Aisha Wahab, your editorial overlooks the context of the underlying debate over foreign policy positions. Labeling critique as inherent racism or Islamophobia does not reflect the neutral oversight expected from an independent editorial board.

Readers rely on your coverage to focus on substance—specifically the candidates’ voting histories, policy records, and qualifications for office—rather than broad characterizations. I urge the board to focus future coverage on these objective benchmarks.

(See MAILBOX, page 6)

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Tri-Valley Pickleball Club members will get a sneak peek next month at Pickleball Kingdom Livermore, an eight-court indoor facility under construction at 4650 Arroyo Vista. The Livermore franchise said it has offered club members a free four-hour timeslot to play pickleball, tour the facility and learn about programs and amenities before it opens to the public. The 25,000-square-foot space is expected to open before the end of the year. In addition to pickleball courts, it will include a community room, gaming lounge, exercise and stretching area, viewing platform, pro shop, dink wall, ball machine and instant video replays. (Photo courtesy of Tri-Valley Pickleball Club)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

Yes on Measure I

Christina Mordoff, Dublin

As a Dublin resident and DUSD parent, I want our schools to thrive—not just get by. That is why I am voting YES on Measure I.

For nearly 20 years, local parcel tax funding has reliably supported our schools. Currently, 72% supports teachers and staff, 14% funds high school tutoring, and 14% directly supports school libraries, science, and the arts.

Dublin schools have already absorbed significant cuts. Without Measure I, our district will lose over \$2 million annually, forcing our children to face larger class sizes, fewer academic and arts programs, and the loss of great teachers.

Measure I renews this essential funding and restores lost purchasing power to keep pace with rising costs. While it includes a modest increase per parcel, the cost is small compared to the immense benefits for our kids. Strict accountability is built in, including an independent oversight committee and mandatory annual audits.

Strong schools benefit our entire community—boosting property values, supporting local businesses, and keeping neighborhoods safe and desirable.

Our children only get one chance at their education. Let's invest in their future and our community by voting YES on Measure I.

Vote for Ben Barrientos for City Council and Angela Brady for School Board

A.S. Lopez, Livermore

Here are two candidates who really care about the residents, especially the children, of their district. Ben Barrientos is the City Council Member who is running for re-election in District 2. In his second term, Ben is advocating for the Springtown Branch Library to stay open for more days and longer hours, at least during weekdays and until 6 p.m. This will make it easier for children in that area to do their homework, to study, or to read a book. Right now, Ben is making plans with the Director of Community Development to put flashing lights at crosswalks on N. Vasco, strategically located where children cross. N. Vasco is notoriously known for its heavy traffic around the time children are arriving at or leaving school.

Angela Brady is running for School Board in District 3. She is the mother of two children, one in elementary and one in middle school. Angela takes time to attend every PTA meeting to know what is happening and how she can help. She faithfully attends the LVJUSD School Board meetings and listens to the concerns of other parents and adds her own. Angela remains steadfast in her commitment to stay informed on all school matters in District 3, and in all the Livermore schools.

VOTE for Ben Barrientos and Angela Brady!

Join Me in Voting for Julie Testa

John Bauer, Pleasanton

Pleasanton Mayor Balch, you have asked the community to hold you accountable.

Let's start with Measure PP. You helped defeat Measure PP by questioning Pleasanton's projected budget deficit. You pointed to our reserves and pension trust, suggesting the City didn't need additional revenue. But after Measure PP failed, an independent financial review confirmed what our award-winning fi-

nance staff had warned us: Pleasanton faces a serious structural deficit.

Now you claim you balanced the budget. But Mayor Balch, balancing a budget by drawing on reserves and pension trust funds is not solving a structural deficit. Those are one-time resources. Our pension trust was established to help meet long-term pension obligations, not cover ongoing operating expenses. It's like paying household bills from savings while continuing to spend more than you earn. Eventually, the savings run out. And the structural deficit remains.

Then there are water rates. You criticized water-rate increases during your campaign. Yet once elected, you voted for additional increases because maintaining safe, reliable water infrastructure costs money.

And downtown? You promised revitalization and economic vitality. Two years later, vacant storefronts remain a serious problem. Businesses have left, and downtown continues to struggle.

Mayor Balch, let's review your record.

You questioned the deficit. Independent experts confirmed it.

You suggested reserves and pension funds were the answer. The structural deficit remains.

You criticized water-rate increases. Then you voted for them.

You promised downtown revitalization. Vacancies remain a serious concern.

This isn't about personalities. It's about accountability, honesty, and fiscal responsibility. Pleasanton deserves leadership that protects our financial future, not simply balances today's budget by drawing down tomorrow's resources. Mayor Balch, you asked residents to hold you accountable. That's exactly what we're doing.

Please join me in voting for Julie Testa.

Vote for Kathy Narum; Pleasanton City Council, District 1

Timothy Neal, Pleasanton

I writing to enthusiastically endorse Kathy Narum for Pleasanton City Council. I'm the retired Police Chief in Pleasanton and have lived in Kathy's district for 45 years. We chose Pleasanton as an ideal place to live and raise a family long ago. It has maintained that quality of life by no accident. It is through the bright and dedicated leadership of people like Kathy Narum we have achieved this. I worked with Kathy during her decades of service as we both served on City Commissions and committees. As a police chief and as a resident, I always found Kathy to be on top of issues and both skillfully and creatively driven toward solutions. Kathy Narum is focused on our economic stability while always maintaining our high quality of life in Pleasanton. Her service ethos is evident in all she does, and her core ethics are unbending.

Kathy's decades of service to our community and the incredible diversity of her experience make her singularly the best our community has to offer. I urge everyone seeking to maintain a fiscally solid, uncompromisingly safe community to join me in electing Kathy Narum to our City Council.

(Timothy Neal, Pleasanton Police Chief (Ret.) 1999-2007)

Voting Time Is Here Again

Patricia Munro, Livermore

The letters to the editor pages are, as usual at this time of the voting

cycle, filled with election advice. Here's my addition to that pile, in two parts: first, what I look for in a candidate, and second, a few of the candidates I endorse in either contentious or under-the-radar races.

I look for candidates who have the willingness to listen to the concerns of the different groups within their constituency and then the courage to make difficult decisions. I want elected officials who understand the difference between being an activist speaking "truth to power," and an elected official, representing their entire constituency and needing to collaborate and compromise in order to accomplish anything. I want people in office who are curious—willing to listen and learn from both constituents and professionals? Ideally—but not always, elected officials have relevant knowledge and/or experience—while also understanding when to be done. Finally, an elected official's personal story and identity is often what makes them passionate about serving the community.

Here's the list:

Insurance Commissioner: Ben Allen, because his experience and knowledge is unparalleled. His district was affected by the Palisades fires, and he understands the issues far better than does his opponent.

Livermore School Board: Angela Brady, Tara Boyce, and Christiaan VandenHeuvel are the three candidates who stand for education and support for all our children.

LARPD: Tim Barry, Mike Ralph, and Lauren Turner will bring needed new blood where it is really needed.

Pleasanton Mayor and Council Members: Jack Balch, Kathy Narum, and Jamie Yee are the three candidates who understand Pleasanton and can work collaboratively for the good of all.

Dublin Mayor: Mike McCorrison's understanding of city issues is simply greater than that of his opponent.

Join Me and Vote for Larry Bird

Dan Ramirez, Livermore

I've been a longtime resident in Livermore and have known Larry Bird for many years. I personally know his long history of service to our Livermore community. He brings 28 years of law enforcement experience, including leadership in community policing, volunteer programs, and management of multimillion dollar budgets. Larry was on the original Board of Directors of the Tri-Valley Pickleball Club and is currently a liaison with LARPD and instructor. Larry has spent over 24 years coaching softball at Livermore High School. He has a great sense of humor and easily communicates with people. Based on his decades of public service, involvement with local youths and hands-on experience with recreation in our community, Larry Bird would bring a valuable perspective to the LARPD Board. Please join me and vote Larry Bird for LARPD in November.

Jamie Yee is the Best Choice

Mark Miller, Pleasanton

Accountability and transparency are essential qualities in City Council members. Having served with Jamie Yee on the Pleasanton School Board for six years, I have seen her demonstrate both firsthand. That is why I believe she is the best choice for District 3 in the upcoming election. Jamie is deeply knowledgeable about the issues facing our community, yet she listens to constituents before forming her positions. Once she reaches a decision, she advocates for it passionately. She is readily accessible, always willing to explain the issues, and, as a lifelong resident, committed to doing what is best for Pleasanton—both now and in the future.

Re-elect Christiaan VandenHeuvel for School Board

Lori Souza, Livermore

I'm voting for Christiaan in November. We need him on the school board because he has the right skills to support our children. His experience as a substitute teacher and PTSA president at LHS provides him with the right perspective. He advocates for practical solutions and data driven decisions. Let's vote to keep him on the school board.

I'm Voting for Jack Balch

Gary Kirscher, Pleasanton

In the upcoming mayoral race, the difference between Julie Testa and Jack Balch can clearly be seen in the issue that was so prominent in the last election. That was proposition PP, the sales tax initiative. Julie was a prominent backer for the raising of taxes. The backers claimed the city would be in a dire position with yearly losses causing dramatic cuts in city services if we didn't raise taxes. We didn't raise taxes. We didn't lose millions and city ser-

vices are still in place. We still have a city facing many issues but I want a mayor who tackles these problems in an unpanicked and rational way through cost cutting, revenue growth and long-term budget analysis. I am seeing a city council, under Jacks' leadership, that seems to work together through compromise and increased citizen involvement. As a 42-year residence of Pleasanton, this is the first time in years that I see hope that our city can successfully navigate the future. I'm voting for Jack Balch.

I Highly Recommend Larry Bird

Carlos Barras, Livermore

I highly recommend Larry Bird for the position of LARPD board member. He has a wealth of experience working with people and various organizations. His experience includes an impressive career as a police officer for the Hayward police department, an extensive head coaching position with the Livermore High girls' softball team, as well as serving as vice-president of the Tri-Valley Pickleball Club. The Tri-Valley pickleball club has been a great program for the Tri-Valley community. As one of the founding members, Larry has been instrumental in its success and rapid growth. He is also a great communicator and a natural leader. As a LARPD board member, he will go the extra mile, and bring his best self in doing what is best for the LARPD communities. Without a doubt, Larry Bird will prove to be a valuable asset to the LARPD board.

Re-elect Ben for Livermore City Council

Carol Silva, Livermore

Voters in northeast Livermore can choose to re-elect Ben Barrientos as their District 2 City Councilmember. Ben supports maintaining our Urban Growth Boundary, preserving open space, and advocating for affordable housing. Also, he plans to help improve public safety, to incentivize renewable resources, and to support the arts to make our city more desirable and interesting to live in and visit.

One of his goals to improve public safety is for the City to install crosswalk warning lights at busy intersections, such as along Vasco Road and other busy roads. Another goal is advocating for ad-

ditional opening hours and dates, especially after school times, at the Springtown Library.

One of Ben's accomplishments as a Councilmember was to encourage the City to invest and revisit the City's old plans to convert the vacant Springtown golf course into a community park. This park now is expected to open this fall. Ben represents the Livermore City Council as a board member of Ava Community Energy. Recently, he has suggested to Ava's CEO to look into installing solar panels on the tiny homes scheduled for development at the Asbury Church site in Livermore.

Ben has been endorsed by the Sierra Club. Ben, a former principal and teacher, who still coaches high school wrestling, has been president of the Livermore Lions Club for several years. He has

lived with his wife in Livermore for 30 years.

He genuinely wants to hear your ideas and concerns. Please re-elect Ben Barrientos for City Council, District 2. Ben will listen to all Livermore residents.

(See MAILBOX, page 7)



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Ryan Tram, a member of Troop 905, has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the traditional Scouts BSA program, after earning a minimum of 21 merit badges and completing a community-service project. Tram created blacktop chess, checkers and tic-tac-toe games at Wells Middle School in Dublin, leading a team of 15 Scouts and five adult volunteers in painting game boards and assembling game pieces made from wooden discs. Tram is a junior at Dublin High School. Troop 905 is sponsored by St. Raymond of Penafort Catholic Church. (Photo courtesy of Kiet and Angela Tram)

MAILBOX
(Continued from page 6)

Good Governance and Smart Fiscal Planning
Doug Miller, Pleasanton

The other shoe just dropped on Pleasanton’s finances, and it turns out the city’s infrastructure maintenance requirements are significant but far short of the claims of the prior City Manager and Council majority.

While the prior estimate of the city’s 10-year infrastructure needs was a jaw-dropping \$900 million, just two years later, this estimate from an exhaustive look at every asset owned by Pleasanton puts the need at \$124 million over the same 10-year period.

Can you imagine how we’d be feeling if we voted to raise our taxes two years ago based upon what the City was telling us? On top of inflation driving up prices on virtually everything anyway, we’d be paying even higher prices for most goods purchased in Pleasanton.

Pleasanton faces financial choices, for sure. The magnitude of the challenge, though, is what matters. The cycle of public finances has jurisdictions with enough funding in some years and the need for making cuts in others. Voters in Pleasanton asked whether the predicted shortfall was real when asked to increase taxes. It was the right question.

We are all better for the careful, calm and fact-based work of the current Pleasanton leadership. Mayor Balch and the current Council majority deserve enormous credit for getting back to an open, transparent, rational form of leadership. We are now dealing with facts — not exaggeration to achieve some private aim.

In my opinion, we are lucky to have returned to good governance in Pleasanton and smart fiscal planning.

Vote for Tim Barry for LARPD Board
Tim Barry, Livermore

It’s a real privilege to run for a seat on the Park District Board of Directors; just as it was serving as General Manager of the District for 15 years, to cap off my 45-year career in public parks and recreation management. What I really want to do is represent you on the Board to advance your issues and interests to the district. I love the district and this community, continuing my work with the Livermore Rotary Club, Livermore Amador Symphony and as a local musician performing at local venues. Vote for Tim Barry for LARPD Board for seasoned leadership, and continued growth in parks, trails, pools and sports fields, child-care and recreation programs!

Ben Barrientos for Livermore City Council
Bob Cowgill, Livermore

I want to give my endorsement to Ben Barrientos for Livermore City Council. Ben has been an active member of our community as teacher, coach, Lions Club, Asbury Church, and so much more. Today, more than ever, we need a representative with the ethics, morals, and kindness that Ben demonstrates in his everyday life. Vote for Ben to continue his leadership to keep Livermore the community where we all want to live.

I Enthusiastically Support Christiaan VandenHeuvel
Lara Webber, Livermore

As a 21-year resident of Livermore who has raised two children in the LVJUSD public schools, I am writing to enthusiastically support the reelection of Christiaan VandenHeuvel to represent

Trustee Area 5 on the school board. He has my vote and my voice

in support of his campaign!

Christiaan has shown skilled, thoughtful, and effective leadership as a school board member. He is a devoted father of kids in the district, a great neighbor, and a compassionate community leader. He chases down every detail in meetings, asks important questions, and listens to the voices he represents in our community.

Most importantly, he knows that the school board exists to serve ALL our students to ensure they all have equal access to a safe, high-quality education. He knows that the school board is no place for religious political or social agendas. It is about taking care of ALL our kids.

I am grateful to Christiaan for his service, and know our community will continue to thrive with leadership like his on the LVJUSD board.

I strongly encourage my neighbors in Trustee Areas 2 and 3 to vote for Tara Boyce and Angela Brady. This election is extremely consequential for all of Livermore; please vote for these candidates and encourage your neighbors to do the same!

Angela Brady is the Right Vote for Area 3
Kristie Wang, Livermore

I have had the opportunity to listen to Angela Brady speak multiple times about the challenging issues facing our public schools. She is smart, thoughtful, and as a parent of two children in our district, very familiar with the issues our students and teachers encounter every day. From her professional training, she is analytical and data-driven and has the capacity to take in a lot of information and make good decisions. Most importantly, she understands the importance of looking out for all of our students, especially those who don’t have anyone to advocate for them. Vote Angela Brady for Area 3!

(Kristie Wang was Livermore School Board Member, 2020-2024)

Letter of Support for Larry Bird for the LARPD Board
Charles Foscalina, Livermore

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Larry Bird for a position on the LARPD Board.

I encourage my family, friends, neighbors, and fellow community members to join me in voting for Larry.

Larry is a devoted family man, father, and grandfather who genuinely cares about our community. He has demonstrated his commitment to giving back through coaching, community service, and helping bring people together. As a founder of our community’s pickleball club, Larry has shown initiative, leadership, and a passion for creating opportunities for people to connect and stay active.

One of Larry’s greatest strengths is his ability to connect with people. He is approachable, accessible, and an excellent listener. He takes the time to hear others’ concerns, consider different perspectives, and work toward practical solutions. These qualities are essential for a board member who will represent the interests and needs of our community.

I believe Larry would bring sound judgment, a collaborative spirit, and a genuine commitment to public service to the LARPD Board. He understands the value of local parks, recreation, and programs in improving the quality of life for residents of all ages.

I am confident Larry would be a thoughtful, dedicated, and accessible representative who listens to our community and works hard to serve its best interests.

Please join me in supporting Larry Bird for the LARPD Board.

I believe he would be an excellent addition and a strong voice for our community.

I’ll Be Voting for Kathy Narum
Ward Kanowsky, Pleasanton

I’ll be voting for Kathy Narum for city council and here’s why. Kathy models the virtues and needs for dedicated civic servants: five years with the Parks and Recreation Commission, five years on the Planning Commission, and almost a decade on the city council. And the list goes on from there with her service on the boards of multiple nonprofits, the PUSD Budget Advisory Committee, Citizens Board Oversight Committee, the 7-11 Committee, and most recently, the Zone 7 Water Agency. This is a resume I can get behind!

This depth and breadth of service across multiple local organizations give Kathy a unique and informed perspective to Pleasanton’s priorities pertaining to water policy, fiscal discipline, and keeping our neighborhoods safe. Decisions she is part of will be the result of thoughtful and thorough analysis and consideration.

As a long time Pleasanton resident, I also appreciate Kathy’s accessibility and the fact that she listens – it’s like having a neighbor looking out for you. So yes, I’ll be voting for Kathy with the confidence that she has the best interests of Pleasanton at heart.

An Ideologue in “Retired Teacher” Clothing

Johnna Thompson, Livermore

As a real retired teacher, I am offended by Livermore School Board candidate Deborah Gibson’s claim on our ballots that she is a retired teacher. She claims (Letters 10/15/2026) that she isn’t trying to deceive voters, but I think that’s exactly what she’s trying to do. Most voters didn’t watch the candidates’ forum, where she says she volunteered the information that her only teaching experience consisted of homeschooling her own children. Most voters, like me, would read her self-proclaimed occupation of

“retired teacher” on our ballots and assume the common meaning of the phrase — that she retired from classroom teaching, probably in a public school. I’m a retired public school teacher, as are all the other retired teachers I know. Calling yourself a retired teacher when you’ve only taught your own kids is like calling yourself a retired nurse when the only nursing you’ve done is to “nurse” your own kids through their childhood illnesses. It’s disingenuous at best; dishonest at worst.

If a voter sees that a candidate is a retired teacher, the voter is likely to assume the candidate has an insid-

(See MAILBOX, page 8)

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A young participant proudly displays her handmade mandala craft at the Diwali Cultural Celebration, held on Saturday, Oct. 17, at the Pleasanton Senior Center. The event, hosted in partnership with the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council (PCAC) and City Library staff, featured art activities and cultural festivities for all ages. (Photo courtesy of PCAC)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 7)

er's knowledge about the operations of public schools and has a vested interest in making sure that there is good governance of those schools. What motivates a candidate who didn't trust her children to our local public schools and who has no experience with our schools? Could it be that she wants to impose her ideological and/or religious beliefs on our students? That would be my assumption. I won't vote for anyone who tries to trick me into believing she's something she is not.

**Deena Kaplanis Has My Vote
Cathryn Villasenor, Livermore**

As a parent and involved volunteer at community events, I've watched Deena Kaplanis closely. Time and again she has done her homework, asked the hard questions, and voted intelligently. On issues of ethics and fiscal responsibility, she has repeatedly been willing to stand alone when others would not. That kind of independent judgment is rare and valuable. She understands that every dollar spent is a dollar that belongs to the community, and that wise stewardship of those funds directly affects the quality of our schools and the opportunities available to our children. For someone who puts both preparation and principle first, Deena Kaplanis has my vote in Area 5.

**Christiaan VandenHeuvel Will Serve All of Our Community
Megahn Hanely, Livermore**

I tend to be wary of anyone who mixes faith with public power, so you might wonder why I'm enthusiastically backing a deeply religious candidate for school board. At first, I supported Christiaan VandenHeuvel mostly because I didn't want Deena Kaplanis to remain on the board. That's not a great reason to vote for anyone. But then I met him, and I came away genuinely impressed by his character. He listens, answers questions directly, and values connecting with people, not just those who agree with him. I'm no longer opposing someone else. I'm supporting Christiaan. Christiaan's faith shapes how he treats people, not how he governs them. He has said plainly that a public school belongs to every family, and his actions honor that.

Though Christiaan and Deena joined the board at the same time, he has demonstrated stronger leadership where it counts. He jumped right into the district's critical budget issues and has served on two budget advisory committees. Deena has not done this work.

Christiaan's statements at board meetings have shown thoughtful consideration and a strong grasp of a trustee's responsibilities. Deena's statements have often been vague or meandering. The notable exceptions have been her votes against Pride celebration, her Title IX comments, and her remarks condoning bullying of trans students. Her clear culture-war commitments contradict her campaign promises about student safety, distract from issues of common concern, and have no place in our public schools.

I want a board member prioritizing fair pay, transparent budgets, strong language and math instruction, and a welcoming environment for every student. Christiaan answers questions openly and honestly, and he doesn't hide his intentions. Most importantly, his engagement with our community shows a deep commitment to all of Livermore.

**Re-elect Ben Barrientos for City Council Dist. 2
Joan Beason, Livermore**

I live off North Vasco Road, and I like having a person on the city council that is aware of the problems and needs in my direct area. Ben has done a very good job in his first four years to help us. He worked with the City Manager to use \$9 million to build a large community park in Springtown which is scheduled to have the ribbon cutting on Nov. 7th. Under his direction, the potholes at the South Vasco Railroad crossing were filled, more handicap parking spaces on First Street have been provided, the Dalton Road, sidewalks were repaired, and old trees were removed with new ones planted. Talking with Ben, I found out that some of his plans going forward are: putting flashing lights at the crosswalks on North Vasco where school children cross, providing a safer bike path on the North Vasco overpass, requesting the city to let the library on Bluebell stay open for more days and have longer hours, and my personal favorite, supporting the widening of North Vasco after Garaventa Ranch Rd. Vote for Ben Barrientos, a fair-minded man for all Livermore residents.

**Kathy Narum for Pleasanton District 1 City Council
Michele Brynjulson, Pleasanton**

Being new to Pleasanton has allowed me to get to know about the many wonderful, long-time residents who have helped to shape this town into the special community that it truly is. Friends have shared with me their respect and admiration for Kathy Narum, specifically her deep experience in grappling with the water issues that this and other California communities struggle to manage, and her interest in working with community members to help protect what makes Pleasanton special as well as to effectively support our future growth. They talk about the clarity she brings to her decision-making processes and her tireless work with grassroots supporters. In her 20+ years of public service, Kathy has shared her knowledge and financial ability with local nonprofit boards, our City Council, and educational foundations, as well as in her willingness to mentor new leaders in our community. I join with my friends and colleagues in supporting Kathy Narum in her Campaign for the Pleasanton District 1 City Council seat.

**To Recuse or Not to Recuse
David Jones, Livermore**

On 10/12/2026, Eric Dillie announced on social media that a complaint had been filed with the FPPC against former LVJUSD Trustee Steven Drouin and incumbent Trustee Christiaan VandenHeuvel, who is running for reelection. Dillie asserted that since their spouses are LVJUSD teachers, Drouin and VandenHeuvel should have recused themselves from a 1/26/2026 School Board vote on a raise for district teachers. Drouin and VandenHeuvel both voted for the raise, thus creating, according to Dillie, a "a clear conflict-of-interest concern under the Political Reform Act." That's the basis for the complaint.

The complaint was filed by Alan Heckman, noted conspiracy theorist, fabulist, fountain of falsehoods, and serial filer of frivolous complaints.

The facts of the matter:

Both Drouin and VandenHeuvel were extremely careful about ensuring they would be within California conflict-of-interest guidelines if they voted on the salary increase.

At the 1/26/2026 meeting, transparently in open session, Drouin and VandenHeuvel asked District legal counsel Dulcinea Grantham for her opinion.

Grantham stated the trustees were legally permitted to vote because, in accordance with California law:

- Their spouses had worked for the district for at least a year before the trustees took office.

- Elected officials can vote on a decision affecting a spouse's compensation when the compensation is the same as that received by other employees in the same classification.

With the legal justification unambiguously established, both trustees voted for the increase.

Heckman's complaint is malicious garbage solely intended to smear VandenHeuvel as a School Board candidate.

The fact that Dillie colluded with Heckman in this sleazy and easily debunked campaign stunt targeting an honorable and respected School Board Trustee is particularly galling, since Dillie is a self-proclaimed "school leader" who has worked in education for decades.

Please elect VandenHeuvel for Area 5. vandenheuvelforschool-board.com

**Tara Boyce Has the Right Skills for a Tough Job
JuNelle Harris, Livermore**

Being a school board member is a tough job. Willingness to put kids first is a prerequisite. But our school board members need more than good intentions to steward a complex organization. They also need the right skills.

Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) is a major enterprise. Its annual operating budget is over \$200 million. It employs more than 1,300 people, serves around 13,000 students and their families at 18 school sites, and affects our entire community.

Since our family joined the district in 2023, we've seen it struggle to set priorities and strategically align resources. This past spring, LVJUSD's ongoing budget issues hit crisis mode. Without sounder oversight, I fear that financial instability will continue to distract our district from its core mission: educating kids.

That's why I'm delighted Tara Boyce is running for the LVJUSD school board. I first got to know Tara as a fellow parent who cares deeply, does her homework, knows how to read a complex spreadsheet, and consistently shows up to speak up for our kids.

Importantly, she also brings the right background and skills for the job: an MBA in accounting and marketing, an undergraduate degree in economics, professional experience with data-driven firms, and a financial consulting practice. In addition, she has served on the district's LCAP and Budget Advisory Committees, where she pushed for greater transparency and accountability. I encourage you to give her your vote.

**Vote Kathy Narum for Our Pleasanton Community
Jen Flynn, Pleasanton**

As Board President of Pleasanton Partnerships in Education (PPIE), I've had the opportunity to work alongside many dedicated community members, including Kathy, who serves with me on the PPIE Board.

One thing I appreciate about working with her is that she always takes the time to understand the discussion at hand and consider all perspectives. Kathy is never afraid to ask thoughtful, sometimes difficult questions to ensure we are making informed decisions. She doesn't accept things at face value, and I believe that a thoughtful approach is valuable in community leadership.

I've seen her dedication to our community in the many committees we have served on together. She understands the importance of collaboration and is genuinely committed to making our community stronger.

Before voting, residents should look closely at candidates' experience, community involvement, and approach to problem-solving.

**Let's Keep Christiaan on the Board
Dawn Matthews, Livermore**

Endorsing Christiaan VandenHeuvel for the Livermore School Board is something I do with great enthusiasm. Christiaan is a "salt of the Earth kind of guy." He is genuine, intelligent, compassionate, and a person of immense integrity. As a retired teacher from Livermore High School, I witnessed Chris-

tiaan's dedication to improving the well-being of our teachers; he led the Livermore High PTSA during my tenure there and did such affirming events and kindnesses for our staff and students; our staff felt very supported by the PTSA under his leadership. In addition, I often had Christiaan as a substitute teacher in my classrooms and his diligence and commitment to doing the very best in my absence was so evident; he subbed for me for multiple days in 2023 when I traveled and then got a horrid bout of Covid. He was the consummate professional, and the students said he was organized, helpful, fair, and compassionate. When I needed to miss for any reason, the first thing I did was rush to see if he could sub for my classes. The students spoke highly of him, and that speaks volumes. This experience in the classroom makes Christiaan uniquely in tune with the needs of our Livermore students; the young people in this community need advocates on the board, and Christiaan is indeed such an advocate. Another experience that informs his perspective on education is his personal experience as an English language learner; we need individuals on the board with that point of view to advocate for our students.

Let's keep Christiaan on the board so he can continue his amazing leadership. I am excited to vote for him again and urge you to do so as well. He will never fail our students. Vote for Vandenheuvel; you won't regret it.

**Kathy Narum for Pleasanton City Council: Experience. Intelligence. Knowledge.
Susan Hayes, Pleasanton**

I enthusiastically endorse Kathy Narum for Pleasanton City Council and encourage the residents of District 1 to vote for her.

Although I do not live in Kathy Narum's district, she represented me for eight years when City Council elections were citywide. She served two full terms, winning both elections with majority support from residents who recognized her strong leadership.

After reaching her term limit, Kathy was selected through a rigorous interview process for appointment to the regional Zone 7 Water Agency Board. She subsequently won election to the Zone 7 Board and has served for the past 3½ years, gaining valuable regional perspective and working with leaders on the critical, complex issues of water quality and availability.

Kathy's commitment to Pleasanton runs even deeper. She has lived here for more than 35 years and raised her two daughters in this community. Her longstanding investment in Pleasanton, combined with her institutional knowledge, proven City Council experience, and regional water expertise, makes her exceptionally well qualified to serve again.

As Pleasanton confronts important decisions about housing, the city budget, and water resources, Kathy's experience and informed leadership will be invaluable.

**Bottom Line: CV is for US!
Faith Alpher, Livermore**

I went back and forth on whether to say something. Then I realized staying quiet isn't an option when our kids are on the line. So here we go.

We need a school board member who shows up for ALL students. CV.

Someone who leads with empathy when a student is struggling. CV.

Someone who will never judge a child because of their race, gender, religion, or anything else. CV.

And let's be honest: when a candidate isn't crystal clear about where they stand, that worries me. Christiaan has been clear since day one.

I met him when he moved into my neighborhood. We'd talk about what he wanted to do for our schools, and wow. He wasn't one of those people who talks a big game and never steps up. He put his feet to the fire and ran. And what a beautiful blaze he's lit for our school board!

Don't just take my word for it. Our incredible teachers have endorsed him too. They're in the classroom every single day. They know what our kids need, and they know Christiaan is the one who will deliver it.

Our teachers want every student treated with love and respect. So do I. And when our kids move on to whatever comes next, I want to know we had the right person in that seat.

Christiaan VandenHeuvel. That's it. That's the vote. He's the voice we want representing us.

(Faith Alpher is Poet Laureate of Livermore)

**I Endorse the "ABC" Slate
Lainie Pascall, Livermore**

As a local parent and advocate for LGBTQ+ youth, I strongly endorse the "ABC" slate for LVJUSD school board: Angela Brady, Tara Boyce, and Christiaan VandenHeuvel.

A few weeks ago, three local non-profit organizations hosted a nonpartisan candidate forum for the LVJUSD school board race. APAPA Tri-Valley, Tri-Valley for Black Lives, and PFLAG Tri-Valley jointly hosted the event. (In full transparency, I'm a board member for PFLAG Tri-Valley and helped organize the event, but I'm speaking in my personal capacity here.)

Only three candidates made the time to show up to this forum. Angela Brady, Tara Boyce, and Christiaan VandenHeuvel spoke on how they would address issues of particular concern for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students and families. Each candidate voiced their commitment to centering student voices to better support and understand the needs of these communities.

I live in Springtown and will enthusiastically vote for Angela Brady. If I lived in the other districts, Tara Boyce and Christiaan VandenHeuvel would have my vote, too.

**Deena Kaplanis: One Voice. Strong Principles. Families First.
Irene Reyes, Livermore**

When four board members stand together, Deena Kaplanis has shown a willingness to stand alone for the families she represents.

A mother, doctor, business owner and school board member for two years, Deena has consistently voted to uphold family values and prioritize student safety, academic excellence, and fiscal responsibility.

Her moral and spiritual convictions are reflected in her service — not just her words. She volunteers in her church's children's ministry, at her children's school PTA, and with the Little League Board, all while managing business and family responsibilities.

Rather than compromise her principles to follow the majority, Deena remains committed to listening to parents, demanding accountability, and keeping schools focused on education.

One voice. Unwavering principles. A commitment to our families. Stand with Deena Kaplanis—and stand for our children's future.

**I Am Strongly Supporting
Kathy Narum
Isabel Gomez, Pleasanton**

As Pleasanton voters weigh our choices for City Council, experience, proven leadership, and a deep commitment to our community matter now more than ever. That is why I am strongly supporting Kathy Narum.

Critical local issues like water and sewer rates require more than just campaign talking points—they demand a deep, working understanding of municipal infrastructure and fiscal responsibility. With her extensive background in public service, including her proven track record right here in Pleasanton, Kathy brings the exact kind of substantive expertise needed to tackle these complex utility and financial challenges head-on.

Beyond her qualifications, I have seen firsthand what makes Kathy an exceptional public servant. I recently observed her leadership as chair of the Pleasanton Unified School District's 7-11 Committee. In a process that required balancing diverse property and community needs, Kathy proved to be a collaborative leader who didn't just encourage participation—she genuinely listened to and carefully weighed input from all corners of our community. That inclusive approach was clearly reflected in the committee's final report to the school board.

Pleasanton needs leaders who unite us, champion inclusive values, and approach governance with genuine care and respect for every resident. Kathy Narum embodies those qualities entirely.

I urge voters to support Kathy Narum for City Council District 1.

**How Will Each Candidate Contribute?
Sharon Draggo, Livermore**

My vote is in the mail for Christiaan VandenHeuval, District 5. In choosing school board trustees, I look beyond a candidate's qualifications to ask an equally important question: How will EACH contribute to a team of five entrusted with serving our district's 18 schools and ALL of nearly 13,000 students?

I supported and voted for Christiaan two years ago. Since then, I have witnessed his steadfast compassion, collaborative spirit, and respect for his colleagues. These qualities help a board listen carefully, work through disagreements, and

keep students' interests at the center of its decisions.

Angela Brady would bring complementary strengths: a background in data analysis, firsthand experience as the parent of children in two of Livermore schools, and curiosity about the experiences of students and families throughout the district.

Tara Boyce would add experience managing large budgets and valuable financial expertise. As the parent of two children attending a district school, she also brings a personal understanding of the decisions that affect students every day.

Together, these candidates offer a combination of perspectives and skills that could serve our schools well. Effective teamwork requires independent judgment, respectful disagreement, and a willingness to learn from one another.

This election will help shape the team responsible for ALL of our schools and EACH of our students. As a community, let's choose trustees who bring both the skills to contribute and the commitment to work together.

**Kaplanis's "Process" Excuse is a Pretext
Joanne Morrison, Livermore**

Once again, Deena Kaplanis has cast the lone vote against LGBTQIA+ youth. On October 13, the LVJUSD board voted 4-1 to recognize October as LGBTQ History Month. Kaplanis voted no, citing an "inconsistent process" because commemorative observances range from one day to a full month.

To make that point, she also voted against five other recognitions on the same agenda. She opposed Character Education Month, which highlights the district's social-emotional learning and encourages students to be responsible, respectful, and safe. She opposed Attendance Awareness Month, a national observance since 2011 that links regular attendance to student success. She opposed Red Ribbon Week, the national campaign encouraging students to stay drug-free. She opposed National Hispanic Heritage Month, which honors the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans with roots in Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America, including many Livermore families. And she opposed Unity Day on October 21, when students learn about the harm of bullying and the value of kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

It is deeply ironic that a trustee who claims to love all kids and champion their safety would reject five resolutions promoting kindness, responsibility, and student well-being. Her "inconsistent process" excuse is plainly a pretext: she sacrificed all five to avoid recognizing LGBTQ History Month.

Kaplanis has repeatedly exposed herself as a fraud. She does not love all kids; she betrays queer students at every opportunity. She is unfit to serve on the LVJUSD board. Area 5 voters should elect Christiaan VandenHeuvel.

**Gibson Response
Bob Johnson, Livermore**

In her letter to the editor in last week's edition of The Independent (10/15/26) Deborah Gibson said that her original intention was to only use the ballot designation "Retired" and added "Teacher" after it was suggested by a clerk. This would seem to indicate that she did not initially see herself as someone who could be described as a retired teacher, since she did not teach in a classroom, but did homeschool two kids.

In her letter she said that she volunteered the information about homeschooling at a forum. That forum happened on September 28th, a considerable amount of time after she filed her ballot designation on August 6th. In the meantime, media coverage referred to her as a retired teacher, apparently without her offering a clarification. The bottom line is that someone who does not have a teaching credential and never taught in a classroom should not be calling themselves a retired teacher, regardless of the explanation offered.

It is important to note that the Livermore Education Association, which represents classroom teachers in Livermore schools has endorsed Angela Brady for Area 3. Angela is a parent with two kids in Livermore schools. The California School Employees Association, representing classified school employees, also endorsed Angela. Teachers and staff who work in the schools see her as the better choice. Angela will provide a parent's prospective, along with her expertise as a data analyst.

Please vote for Angela Brady in Area 3 for the Livermore school board.

(See MAILBOX, page 9)



A Pride attendee welcomes community from behind a table laden with rainbow decorations, arts and crafts, and children's activity sheets at the Livermore Pride celebration at Bankhead Plaza on Saturday, Oct. 17. (Photo — May Fraser)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 8)

I Support Kathy Narum

Barry Brynjulson, Pleasanton

I support Kathy Narum for Pleasanton's District 1 City Council seat.

She has the knowledge, experience, and character to help balance out the current conservative makeup of Pleasanton's council.

Follow California Law, Protect Our Students and Our Budget

B.J. Reynolds-Koonce, Livermore

At the Sept. 28 Livermore Vine candidate forum, school board candidates Deena Kaplanis, Deborah Gibson and Stephen Orgain each backed restrictions on transgender students that California law does not allow. Kaplanis and Orgain favored sorting sports by sex, and Gibson opposed students using locker rooms that match their gender. That same day, the federal government rescinded Title IX protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. California's Education Code still protects these students, and under state law they use facilities and play on teams that match their gender.

A school board must follow state law. Do these candidates understand that their approach would put the district out of compliance with the Education Code and open it to costly litigation? Kaplanis, Gibson, and Orgain campaign on fiscal responsibility. Inviting a lawsuit is the opposite. Our district is working through real budget challenges, and money spent on avoidable litigation is money taken from classrooms.

This election will also shape the culture of our district. Every child deserves to feel safe and respected at school, and our campuses should not become a battleground over who belongs.

The ABC slate offers steady, qualified leadership. Tara Boyce brings finance experience and has served on the district's budget advisory committee. Angela Brady is a parent and data analyst who prioritizes transparency and student safety. Christiaan VandenHeuvel has helped guide the district through hard financial decisions and has spoken up for the well-being of every student, including LGBTQ+ students.

Choose inclusion and responsible leadership. Vote for Tara Boyce in Area 2, Angela Brady in Area 3 and Christiaan VandenHeuvel in Area 5.

Vote Steve Hilton

David Ott, Pleasanton

Californians can make our state safe, affordable and prosperous again by voting for Steve Hilton for governor.

Hilton will cut taxes for working families and businesses, including eliminating state income tax on the first \$150,000 of earnings. He will slash burdensome regulations that

are driving employers out of California. He will aggressively tackle waste, fraud, and corruption in government programs. He will suspend unnecessary environmental policies inflating gas prices to bring them closer to the national average. He will restore law and order by enforcing existing laws. He will demand real accountability in our schools so students actually meet math and English standards.

For years, Californians have been told that more Democrat government spending and programs would solve these problems. Instead, many residents are struggling with higher costs, declining public trust, and concerns about the direction of the state.

When Becerra was the head of HHS under Biden, 330K immigrant children were lost. Many Biden White House officials reportedly viewed Becerra's performance as underwhelming, and that he lacked the operational management to be a leader. The Washington Post/CNN narrative from 2022 said some White House aides viewed Becerra as "hands-off" during key moments. Becerra will raise taxes, reduce public safety, and ruin our state. Becerra failed as HHS lead. How can he be trusted to lead our state?

As the saying goes, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. We cannot afford more of the failed democrat policies. Californians are tired of all the problems caused by the one-party Democrat rule. We have a choice in this election: continue with the same failed Democrat policies or try a different common-sense approach.

Vote for Steve Hilton for governor. California has nothing to lose — and everything to gain.

Guess Who Came to Dublin's No Kings Day?

Eloise Hamann, Dublin

Barack Obama was there in cardboard style. I had purchased a folding actual photo of him during his first term. I used it to celebrate his first inauguration with friends at my house. I can't believe how often he has attended our events and he is the talk of the party.

I've taken his statue to three No Kings Days: one in Pleasanton, one in Seaside Oregon, and the last in Dublin. I also hid him in our Redwood Trees for a celebration of my 60th anniversary with my husband, Kenn, in our backyard with Barack the talk of the party, as in all events I've brought him out.

In the last event at the No Kings event in Dublin, even more people were excited to see him. Talking about how they love and miss him, they kindly asked if they could take a picture of themselves with him. Often, a group of friends wanted their picture with Barack.

I had put a sign on Barack Obama that stated "This is what a proper president looks like" for the No Kings in Dublin. Sometimes I'd chant, "What does a proper president look like?" followed by "This is what a proper president looks like" to the rhythm of an old chant."

Integrity

Frank Cannella, Livermore

Our president recently did a few more things that further tarnish his record in foreign affairs. First, he announced he had secured an agreement from both Russia and Ukraine to stop attacking each other's oil reserves in an effort to stop the worldwide price pressure. Ukraine quickly agreed, but Russia continued attacking, apparently not agreeing in spite of what Trump said, so the war rages on. Then Trump pulled what can only be called a double-cross on Ukraine; he lifted sanctions on Russia so they could release about 750 million dollars in diesel fuel, which will give the Russians the funds necessary to increase their bombardment of Ukraine, thereby tipping the war into Russia's hand. Then Trump said Zelenskyy was the problem and he should step down from the Ukrainian presidency. But that wasn't the only thing. Apparently, Trump reduced the Starlink capability of Ukraine so there would be less time to respond to Russian attacks. The new result: more damaged schools, hospitals, power plants and human loss in Ukraine. Some senators called Elon Musk himself to complain, but they were told those decisions are out of his control; only the President has the power to make such an order. Naturally, the administration denied that was the case. I, of course, believe that with as much faith as I believe anything else the administration says. All of our western allies are disgusted with Trump (again), and I really can't blame them.

I guess Trump will need to wait another year to get that Nobel peace prize to which he actually believes he's entitled. He should check with Norway again, but I don't like his chances.

Welcome to Trump World: Elon Musk

Rosario Milelli, Pleasanton

Elon Musk is no ordinary billionaire. He helped lead DOGE while federal agencies and foreign-aid programs were dismantled. Food assistance, disease surveillance and programs intended to prevent outbreaks such as Ebola were disrupted. Researchers have warned that sustained cuts could ultimately cost 14 million lives by 2030. Those are not accounting entries. They are human beings. For perspective, Nazi Germany murdered six million Jews and millions of other victims. The comparison is not one of motive or method; it is a reminder of the human scale represented by numbers we otherwise read too casually. Musk once waved a chainsaw to symbolize DOGE. Budget lines can be cut with a chainsaw. Human consequences cannot.

At the same time, Musk has spent hundreds of millions of dollars influencing American elections while companies he controls receive billions in government and defense contracts.

Then there is Ukraine.

Critical military communications built by SpaceX have become entangled with political decisions over when and where Ukraine may use them. Whatever the precise chain of command, the larger question is unavoidable:

When does a government contractor become a national-security threat?

Musk increasingly resembles something democracies were never designed to accommodate: a private sovereign. He controls launch capability, satellites, communications infrastructure and companies deeply embedded in American national security, while possessing enough personal wealth to exert extraordinary political influence.

No private citizen should have that combination of power.

If a company becomes indispensable to national defense, government should impose strict contractual control, require redundant systems, and in an extreme national-security circumstance, be prepared to take control of critical capabilities with compensation.

Technology does not confer immunity. Money does not confer governmental authority.

Wealth does not confer sovereignty.

Trump Is on the Ballot

Keith Jackson, Dublin

The current ballot has many important issues and people to vote for or against, and everyone needs to vote. But Donald Trump and the Republican party are also on the ballot. Not in name, but we have the opportunity to send a message to Trump and his party that their job is to support the American people, not just Trump. The current Republican party is the Trump party and does whatever Trump tells them to do. They should not be in charge of anything, certainly not the country, and all Republicans need to be voted out of office. They are not all bad people, but their party supports a want-to-be dictator, and that party needs to get the message that this is not acceptable. Unfair to vote all Republicans out? Maybe, but a strong message needs to be sent. Corruption, cruelty, lawlessness, the destruction of international trade and relationships, abandoning a democracy in Ukraine to support Russia, endless war, (which we are losing), the complete incompetence, and a multitude of other sins being committed in our name are all on the ballot. Trump does not care about the suffering he is causing. He never has and never will. What used to be the Republican party is now gone. If you are a lifelong Republican, the party you have always supported has changed. It has been replaced by a cult of personality, no longer supporting anything but Trump's ego. We all need to send this message to the current Republican party that their leadership has been a total failure. We deserve better. Or do we? Let's all vote and find out.

Their Biggest Lie

Glenn White, Dublin

Republicans pretend that they will Make America Great Again. But they never said when it was great, what made it great, when it stopped being great and why it stopped. Therefore, we can conclude that the MAGA label itself

is a lie based upon lies because Republicans have no idea what a Great America is, let alone how to achieve it.

Remember this on election day because the GOP makes no secret of its hatred for our state and its willingness to employ cold-blooded cruelty to execute its hatreds, bigotries and lies against us, as my previous two letters described in the Independent Mailbox (10/8/2026 and 10/15/2026).

California must prepare to defend itself from Washington-based GOP threats against our rights and liberties by electing state and local officials with the record and courage to stand up for liberty and justice for all rather than spineless sycophants whose main qualification appears to be their willingness to grovel before their dear party leader.

Vote to Change the Status Quo

Ramona Krausnick, Dublin

Sometimes when I watch the national news, I see reporters asking Trump supporters what they think of the job he's doing. So many, without fail, say "He's doing a good job" or "He's doing a great job." I've heard this same response for many months. I've never heard any of the reporters ask, "Where EXACTLY do you think he is doing a good job?" or "Please list for me the things he has done

that makes you think he's doing a good job." Duh. Simple question. Why has no reporter asked this? I also wonder if any of the Trump supporters could list anything. When I hear their responses, it sounds as though they are "parroting" what they've heard on Fox News or from the White House.

If you have not voted yet, I strongly urge you to vote for every Democrat on the ballot from the top on down to change the status quo, unless of course you're happy with more of the "good job" Trump is doing. Please don't mail your ballot back. Drop in to the nearest drop box which is the safest place to put it so it will be received and counted. Sign up for Ballot Tracking and they will let you know that your ballot has been received and will be counted.



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THE
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-- GALLERY --

Award-Winning Local Artist

George Kanakis

Featuring Greek Themes & California Landscapes



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

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VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

LIVERMORE RESIDENTS: Share your talents with the community by volunteering on one of the City of Livermore's advisory bodies. We are accepting applications now through November 6, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District Board of Trustees (1 vacancy)

Join us in determining general policies for controlling mosquitoes and limiting the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases. Board includes one representative of each incorporated city in Alameda County. Website: <https://www.mosquitoes.org/>

Board Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:00 pm in person at the Office of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District, 23187 Connecticut Street, Hayward CA

(1) Regular Term ending 1/1/2031 (4-year term)

SAVE THE DATE! In-person interviews are scheduled for November 10, 2026. For more information or to apply, please visit www.livermoreca.gov/AB, call the City Clerk's office at (925) 960-4200, or email: cityclerk@livermoreca.gov.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

LIVERMORE RESIDENTS: Share your talents with the community by volunteering on one of the City of Livermore's advisory bodies. We are accepting applications now through November 6, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

Tri-Valley Conservancy Board of Directors (1 vacancy)

Residents of Livermore who reside within the City limits are invited to submit applications to serve as the City of Livermore appointee to the Tri-Valley Conservancy (TVC) Board of Directors.

TVC operates as a governing board focused on strategic direction, fiduciary oversight, and organizational accountability to fulfill TVC's mission to promote economically sustainable vineyards and orchards, and increase permanently protected, biologically diverse open spaces in the Tri-Valley. Board members serve four-year terms (maximum two consecutive) and commit approximately 5–10 hours per month, including board and committee meetings. More information on the **Tri-Valley Conservancy** can be found at www.trivalleyconservancy.org.

(1) Regular Term ending 1/1/2031

The board meets approximately six times a year on the fourth Thursday of the assigned month, from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm, at Tri-Valley Conservancy's office at 4444 East Avenue in Livermore.

SAVE THE DATE! In-person interviews are scheduled for November 10, 2026. For more information or to apply, please visit www.livermoreca.gov/AB, call the City Clerk's office at (925) 960-4200, or email: cityclerk@livermoreca.gov.

Reader Snapshots

Share Your Best Shot

We are looking for local photos to feature in The Independent's Reader Snapshots section. Whether it's a beautiful moment, a slice of Tri-Valley life or something that made you smile, we want to see it. Email your image, full name, city of residence and a brief caption to editor@independentnews.com for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue.



A picture-perfect display of late-summer squash, sunflowers, and blooms thrives in this garden harvest on Pomona Way in Livermore. (Photo courtesy of Ernestina Shay)

AWARD

(Continued from front page)

wineries, while preserving their approachable, family-owned roots and intimate welcoming tasting room experiences.

"It's so exciting. It took so many years to get this award," said Heather McGrail, president of McGrail Vineyards and Winery and chair of the Livermore Valley Wine Community's Marketing and Brand Awareness Committee and Taste our Terroir event.

McGrail, who opened her family's winery in 2008, recalled the first (then called) Livermore Valley Winegrowers meeting.

"We all said someday we are going to get this award... but it was kind of like, 'are we ever?' You just don't know."

But it remained a collective goal. And McGrail and her community of winemakers and winery owners have not let up on realizing the dream.

In the last five or six years, she said, "It was like, no guys, we're doing it. We're going to get this award," McGrail said. "We have this wine region that is so special and with so many amazing people, and the community here, you can't beat it."

"Livermore Valley is a region with deep roots and a clear vision for its future," said Tonya M. Pitts, writer-at-large and wine reviewer at Wine Enthusiast and award-winning sommelier. "Its sustained focus on quality, coupled with the authenticity and hospitality

that define the region, has made Livermore Valley a compelling destination for today's wine consumer. It is a region that knows where it came from, and is not afraid to move forward."

That continual looking ahead has been instrumental in shaping the region's wine identity.

In 2025, Livermore Valley named Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc its signature varietals, building on their history in the valley, while focusing on grapes particularly well suited to its future. A 2022 UC Davis study identified both varietals as well positioned for successful growth in Livermore Valley based on the region's climate, soils and irrigation conditions. The designation reflects a broader effort to build on what has always worked in the valley, yet thoughtfully defining a distinct identity for its next chapter.

While the award validates years of hard work, "I feel like it's just the beginning," McGrail said. "This is just the next step where we get to continue what we're doing and make things even brighter and more exciting."

In recent years, the Livermore Valley Wine Community has expanded winemaker education, brought in outside vineyard and winemaking expertise, strengthened partnerships with local viticulture education programs and creat-

ed opportunities for wineries to access laboratory testing and other quality resources.

For all the hard work, McGrail said everything ultimately points back to one thing.

"It's our community, Livermore as a whole; we have a special place here," she said.

"I mean you think about the wine industry and it's like, yeah, that's your competitor, but not here, no; that's my friend, the one who brought over a forklift when mine broke down in the middle of harvest."

Jessica Carroll, owner and winemaker at JMC Cellars, echoed McGrail's sentiment.

"I don't know what it is about Livermore....someone asked me: How did you guys get to be like this?" Carroll asked. "I still don't have an answer. But people who are in the industry are choosing to be in the industry because they are passionate about it. And they're choosing this life, this community; and they're choosing to do it together."

"I think Tonya (Pitts's) phrase was 'bringing joy to wine,' McGrail added. "That's what I want to be known for, being the place that brings joy to wine."

"And I feel like in a time when the wine industry is down—things are not great as a global (wine) world right now—it's like, no, we're still here, and we're going to make it great. And we're winning."

OBITUARIES

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Carol Georgine
Nov. 18, 1938 - July 27, 2026



Carol Georgine "Kolb" Strom died peacefully on July 27, 2026, at the age of 87.

Carol was born Nov. 18, 1938, in Livermore, California. She was a third-generation member of the Kolb pioneer family in Dublin, California. She grew up on the Kolb Ranch on Dublin Canyon Road. Her childhood home was moved to Dublin Heritage Park and Museums in 2009. Preserving and passing on her family history to future generations was one of Carol's greatest sources of pride and joy.

Carol graduated from Amador Valley High School in 1956. She lived and worked on the ranch until she met and married Eugene "Gene" Strom in 1957. In 1966, they built their home in Pleasanton, where Carol lived until 2025. It was there that they raised their three sons.

In 1967, Gene and Carol started Gene's Village Bootery in Dublin, which became known as World of Shoes in 1977. The family

business continued until 2017.

Carol enjoyed travel. Taking cruises, including trips to Alaska and thru the Panama Canal were highlights. She loved genealogy, reading and working in her garden. She was also an active member of John Knox Presbyterian Church of Dublin. She also enjoyed participating in support groups such as Bosom Buddies and Swell group.

She is survived by her sons, Scott Strom and his wife, Christina Strom, of Pleasanton, Casey Strom

and his wife, Carol "CG" Strom, of Angels Camp; grandchildren Jessilyn, William, Danika, Keith "KJ", and Sean, along with several great-grandchildren; nephews Craig Miller and his wife, Judy, Max Miller and his wife, Ramona; and niece Janice Thrasher and her husband, Rick.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Elsie Kolb; her sister, Donna Miller; her brother, William "Bill" Kolb; and her son, Keith Strom. In 2025, Carol moved to a memory care facility in Pleasanton, where she spent her final months.

A Celebration of Life will be held Oct. 30, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. John Knox Presbyterian Church, 7421 Amarillo Road, Dublin. Reception to follow. In Lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Carol's name to Bristol Hospice East Bay, 5820 Stoneridge Mall Rd., Suite 209, Pleasanton, CA 94588. bristolhospicefoundationca.org

James John Concannon
July 25, 1931 - Oct. 12, 2026



James John Concannon, a lifelong resident of Livermore and a third-generation vintner, passed away peacefully on Oct. 12, 2026, at the age of 95, surrounded by his loving family.

Born to Joseph and Nina Concannon, Jim grew up in Livermore, where winemaking was deeply rooted in his family's heritage. He attended St. Michael School and graduated from Livermore High School in 1949, where he played varsity basketball and proudly earned his letterman sweater. He later graduated from Saint Mary's College in 1953 before serving in the U.S. Army. Afterward, Jim studied winemaking and chemistry at UC Davis before returning to Concannon Vineyard.

In 1961, Jim became the first winemaker to commercially bottle Petite Sirah as a varietal wine, earning him the title "Father of Petite Sirah." He also contributed to UC Davis's Cabernet Sauvignon clonal selection program, helping propagate vines that led to Cabernet Sauvignon clones now widely planted throughout California. Jim later transitioned into marketing and traveled across the country to share the Concannon name and his family's winemaking heritage.

of community service, he leaves a lasting legacy in Livermore and beyond.

Jim is survived by his beloved wife of 66 years, Helen; his children, Mary Lessard (Scott), Anna Marie Moore (Ken), and Paul Concannon (Robin); his grandchildren, Shannon Lessard Merry (Bradley), Eric Lessard, and Kyle Moore; his sister, Nina Radisch (Jack); and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends. He was preceded in death by his eldest son, John Concannon, in 2025.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, Oct. 27, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Michael Catholic Church in Livermore. A private family graveside interment will follow. A Celebration of Life will be held by invitation only.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Michael School or St. Michael Catholic Church in Livermore.

Jim will be remembered for his pioneering contributions to California winemaking, his enduring love for his family, and his lifelong dedication to the Livermore Valley. His influence will endure in the vineyards he helped shape, the community he served, and the generations who follow.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Virginia Diaz Romero
Dec. 6, 1933 — Oct. 12, 2026



Virginia Diaz Romero passed away peacefully on Oct. 12, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. She leaves behind a beautiful legacy of unconditional love, kindness, compassion, and cherished memories that will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Virginia was born on Dec. 6, 1933, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Manuel and Lucy Diaz. The eldest of seven children, she moved with her parents and siblings to Madera, California, at the age of 12. It was there that she met the love of her life, Fernando Romero. They married in July 1955, beginning a beautiful journey together filled with love, devotion, adventure, and family. Their shared Catholic faith was the foundation of their marriage, strengthening their bond and guiding them through life's joys and challenges. Together, they built a home rooted in faith, love, and devotion to family, passing those cherished values on to the generations that followed.

Together, Virginia and Fernando raised four children and built a life rich in family traditions and treasured memories. In 1968, their adventurous spirit led them to the San Francis-

co Bay Area, leaving behind extended family to embrace a new chapter in their lives. Virginia welcomed the adventure wholeheartedly, delighting in exploring the many sights and attractions the Bay Area had to offer.

After living in Hayward, the family settled in Livermore in 1974, where Virginia found a community and a place she proudly called home.

Virginia was a devoted and supportive partner in her husband's endeavors. In 1980, when Fernando pursued his dream of opening Tri Valley Auto Body, Virginia was there beside him, offering encouragement and lending a helping hand. Whether answering telephone calls or assisting with administrative responsibilities, she contributed

in her own meaningful way to their family business.

A woman of remarkable warmth, grace, and generosity, Virginia had a gentle spirit and a genuine kindness that made everyone feel welcome and loved. She was blessed with creativity and many talents, and she had a special gift for making ordinary moments extraordinary.

A gifted seamstress, Virginia expressed her creativity through the beautiful things she made with her own hands. Among her many accomplishments was sewing her sister Stella's wedding gown and countless pieces of clothing for her daughter. One particularly treasured memory was the flower girl dress she designed and lovingly created overnight, a wonderful example of her talent, determination, and devotion to those she loved.

Virginia was equally gifted in the kitchen, where cooking and baking were another expression of her love. Her specialties were traditional Mexican dishes, and her homemade tortillas and tamales were simply the best. Her home was always welcoming, with a fresh pot of coffee and pan dulce ready to share with anyone who stopped by. Whether family, friends, or unexpected visitors, everyone

was greeted with warmth, hospitality, and something delicious to enjoy. Her kitchen was more than a place to prepare meals; it was a gathering place where stories were shared, laughter was plentiful, and lasting memories were made.

Virginia also treasured the friendships and sense of community she found at St. Michael's Church in Livermore. She especially enjoyed attending the Golden Friends Luncheons, where she delighted in the companionship, conversation, and social gatherings. With her lifelong love of creativity, she particularly looked forward to the craft and painting classes, which brought her much joy.

Above all, Virginia's greatest joy was her family. She adored her grandchildren and embraced every opportunity to spend time with them. Whether babysitting, hosting sleepovers, or creating special memories, she made each grandchild feel loved and treasured. Her home was a place where wonderful childhood memories were made, and her loving presence became an unforgettable part of their lives.

Virginia was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Fernando Romero, who passed

away in July 2021; her parents, Manuel and Lucy Diaz; her sister, Stella Rodriguez; her brother, Gilbert Diaz; and her daughter-in-law, Kimberly Romero. Her marriage to Fernando, spanning nearly 66 years, was a beautiful testament to their enduring love, unwavering faith, and lifelong commitment to one another and their family.

She is survived by her four children: George Romero (Becky), Julie Romero Genung (Scott), Fernando Romero Jr. (Annette), and David Romero (Ingrid); her loving siblings, Benita Gonzalez, Mary Herrera, Joseph Diaz, and Teresa Contreras; along with 14 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, another great-grandchild on the way, and one great-great-grandchild.

Virginia lived her life with kindness, compassion, creativity, and an unwavering love for others. She gave generously of herself, never seeking recognition, and found happiness in the simple pleasure of caring for those around her.

She will be remembered not only for the beautiful things she created, the wonderful meals she prepared, or the traditions she passed down, but for the love woven into everything she did.

Her hands were seldom idle, her heart was always giving, and her home was always welcoming.

Though her presence will be deeply missed, Virginia's greatest legacy is the love she leaves behind—a love that will continue through the generations of her family and in the countless lives she touched.

May she rest in eternal peace, reunited with her beloved Fernando.

Funeral Services Family and friends are invited to gather in remembrance and celebration of Virginia's life.

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2026 — Visitation and Vigil Rosary Callaghan Mortuary, 3833 East Ave., Livermore, California. Visitation: 6:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m. Vigil Rosary: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2026 — Mass of Christian Burial 1:00 p.m. St. Michael Catholic Church, 458 Maple Street, Livermore, California

Interment Immediately Following Mass, St. Michael Catholic Cemetery, 3885 East Ave., Livermore, California

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

OBITUARIES

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Joann Lydon
Jan. 8, 1942 — Oct. 2, 2026

It is with deep sadness and loving hearts that we announce the passing of Joann Lydon (Doro), on Oct. 2, 2026, at the age of 84.

Joann was born in Chicago, Illinois, on Jan. 8, 1942 and relocated to Southern California at nine years old. After graduating Morningside High in Inglewood, she met and married her husband, Rick. Together they started their 64-year journey and raised their two children, Anthony and Annette.

Later, they relocated to Pleasanton, California, where they lived for 45 years and built a life filled with family, friendships, and cherished memories.

A woman of Catholic faith, Joann carried her faith and values throughout her life. She was a devoted wife, loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and cherished member of her family and community.

Joann was an active member of the Pleasanton Lions Club, serving her community for over 40 years and forming many lifetime friendships.

She also worked at Petco for more than 20 years, showing her love for all animals and



forming lasting connections with coworkers and customers.

Joann is survived by her husband, Rick; son, Tony Ly-

don of Livermore, California, Ann Lydon; grandsons, Mason Lydon (Seattle, Washington), Nicholas Lydon (Reno, Nevada); daughter, Annette Boroff (Don) of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; granddaughter Stephanie Brooks (Kyle) of McKinney, Texas; and great-granddaughter, Hannah Brooks.

Joann will be remembered for the love she gave, her devotion to her family, her dedication to her work, and the many cherished memories she created. She held a special place in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

Her love, strength, faith, and presence will be deeply missed. May she rest in eternal peace, and may perpetual light shine upon her.

Services at St. Augustine's Catholic Church, 3999 Bernal Ave., Pleasanton CA

Memorial Service 10:30 a.m., followed by Celebration of Life reception.

Inurnment at St. Augustine's Cemetery, 5750 Sunol Blvd., 2:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, if you desire, Joann's favorite charities are any animal shelter or St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Stephen Alan Roberts
Aug. 24, 1951 — July 25, 2026

Stephen Alan Roberts was a loving son, husband, brother, uncle, and friend. He passed away suddenly from heart failure on July 25, 2026, in Livermore, California, at the age of 74. He was born on Aug. 24, 1951, in Hayward, California.

Steve was a happy, friendly boy who loved sports and excelled in both baseball and basketball. Named the home run hitter in Little League baseball, Steve continued playing sports throughout his academic years. He played CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) Basketball, Calaroga Jr. High basketball, and three years of varsity basketball at Mt. Eden High School. By his senior year, Steve had become the all-time scoring leader for a varsity player. His record wasn't broken until many years later.

Driven by his love of basketball and natural athleticism, Steve graduated from Stanislaus State University with a degree in Physical Education (minor in English Literature). He went on to complete his teaching credential and became a beloved



coach and substitute teacher. He eventually went to work for PSA Airlines and later US Airways, where he received many letters of commendation for his "above and beyond" personalized customer service.

Most of all, Steve loved his family. He loved his parents, brothers, nieces, nephews, and relatives dearly. Holidays and special occasions with his family were very important to him. He truly enjoyed being an uncle, and he treasured his family, especially his dear wife Daria, who he

married on June 12, 1982.

Steve was known for his friendly and cheerful demeanor, and he treated everyone he met with respect and kindness—often recognizing people he had only met once and remembering details about them. He enjoyed nature, his cats, fishing, the beach, reading, and country music.

Steve is survived by his wife of 44 years, Daria Roberts (Marengo). He is also survived by his brother Martin Roberts, and many beloved nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents, Verna and Leland "Bud" Roberts, and his brother Michael Roberts.

A memorial mass is scheduled for Oct. 28 at St. Augustine's Church in Pleasanton, with a reception to follow in the parish hall. Father Mark Wiesner will officiate the ceremony. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Steve's life.

In lieu of flowers, his family requests donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. www.stjude.org

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Ken Herman
May 16, 1933 — Sept. 28, 2026

Ken Herman, beloved husband, father, musician, and friend, passed away on Sept. 28, 2026, at the age of 93.

Ken lived a full and meaningful life, filled with music, friendship, family, and the activities he loved. A lifelong jazz drummer, he played drums for many years and was proud of his connection to the world of jazz and music. He was also an avid racquetball player and enjoyed the friendships and camaraderie that came with the sport.

Ken was a devoted husband to his wife, Tina, with whom he made his home in Dublin, California. He cherished his sons, Rob (Wendy) and Greg, who live in Seattle, and took great pride in his family. He was also a loving part of the lives of



Tina's children, Lisa Soares, Don (Trish), and Cindy Galli (Eric).

Ken was a proud grandfather to Korey, Tyler, Carl, DJ, Josh, Madison (Jacob), Dominic, Anthony, and Vincent.

Ken is also survived by his two sisters in Wisconsin, Janice and Christine, along with many

relatives and friends.

Ken's love of jazz, racquetball, and family were important parts of his life. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Celebration of Life:

A celebration of Ken's Life will be held on Nov. 7, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Philip Lutheran Church in Dublin, California.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to Saint Philip Lutheran Church, Tunnel to Towers, or Samaritan's Purse.

The family welcomes friends and loved ones to join them in celebrating Ken's life and sharing memories of a man who brought music, friendship, and love to those around him.

Toby Lee Rien
Jan. 12, 1955 — Sept. 30, 2026



Toby Lee Rien of Clovis, California, passed away peacefully at home after a brief illness on Sept. 30, 2026. He was surrounded by his close family and dear friends in the days and weeks before his passing.

Toby was born on Jan. 12, 1955, at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas, and raised in Livermore, California.

In 1973, he graduated from Livermore High School, where he played baseball and was a varsity basketball star. He then attended California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, earning a Bachelor of Science in Sociology in 1978.

In September 1980, Toby began serving the community with the Fresno County Sheriff's Department. Over his distinguished 30-year career, he served as a narcotics detective, patrol division sergeant, crisis negotiator, SWAT officer, and Patrol Area Commander. He retired in 2010 as a Lieutenant and Watch Commander.

Family, friends, and col-

leagues will fondly remember Toby for his many selfless acts of generosity and his infectious, self-deprecating sense of humor. After retiring, he traveled widely with Corinne, family, and friends across Central and Western Europe, Scandinavia, the British Isles, and Ireland. He spent many years riding his motorcycle with friends to Sturgis, South Dakota, but was happiest at home, man-icuring his yard, detailing his cars, and entertaining strangers, friends, and family.

He is survived by his wife,

Corinne, with whom he shared 43 years; two children, Brian Steven Rien (Lauren) of Bonney Lake, Washington, and Brittany Marie Rien of Concord, California; brothers Timothy Brian Rien (Ann) of Graecagle, California, and Richard R. Rien (Libby) of Sparks, Nevada; sister and brother-in-law, Elaine and Eric Thompson, of Clovis, California; one grandchild, Jacob; six nieces and nephews; and twelve great-nieces and nephews, all of whom will miss him terribly.

He is preceded in death by his mother, Joan Ann Rien; his grandparents, Lloyd and Charlotte Culford; and his first cousin, Karl M. Vargas.

Memorial services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the Rien family requests that donations in Toby's name be made to any of Toby and Corinne's favorite charities: Valley Animal Center in Fresno; Catholic Charities in Fresno; St. Anthony of Padua in Fresno; or Sale Ranch Animal Sanctuary.

Carol J. Clobes
Aug. 17, 1940 — Oct. 4, 2026



Carol J. Clobes, 86, of Livermore, California, passed away peacefully on Oct. 4, 2026, in Pleasanton, California.

Carol was born on Aug. 17, 1940, in Buffalo, New York, the only child of William and Florence Collins. After graduating from East High School in Rochester, New York, she attended SUNY Geneseo, where she studied education, and later earned a graduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis.

Carol began her teaching career in 1966 at an elementary school in Kenmore, New York. In 1967, she married Arnold Clobes in Amherst, New York. The two met while singing in their church choir. They built their life together first in upstate New York and then in Connecticut, where their sons, Scott and Todd, were born. The family later moved to Washington State before settling in Livermore in 1981. Carol made the Tri-Valley her home for more

than four decades, enjoying its fair weather and fine wine.

A beloved teacher, Carol taught kindergarten at Our Savior Lutheran Ministries for 20 years before retiring in 2003. She continued to tutor students independently and to volunteer at her church for many years. Her students' successes brought her great joy, and she was especially delighted to teach the children of her former students. A devoted member of Our Savior, Carol

gave her time and heart to her church community. Friends and family remember Carol as a gracious hostess who loved to bring people together around good food and fellowship. Her Christmas decorations and holiday cookie exchanges were legendary.

Carol is survived by her son, Todd (Dawn) of Sacramento, California, and granddaughter, Sabrina. She was preceded in death by her husband, Arnold, and her son, Scott.

A memorial service will be held on Nov. 6, 2026, at 11 a.m. at Our Savior Lutheran Ministries, 1385 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore, CA. A reception will follow on site.

In lieu of flowers, and in honor of Carol's lifelong commitment to education and literacy, the family requests donations to the School Scholarship Fund at Our Savior Lutheran Ministries or to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Marlene Chapman-Young
May 3, 1948 — Oct. 2, 2026

Marlene Chapman-Young, 78, passed away peacefully of natural causes at her home on Friday, Oct. 2, 2026.

Marlene was born on May 3, 1948, to Melvin and Lona Chapman of Chinook, Montana. She was the third of five children, growing up alongside her siblings, Marilee Johnson (Chapman), Margaret Chapman, Derryl Chapman, and Debbie Olson (Chapman).

Marlene and Bob Young raised three sons, James (Jim Bob), Darryl, and Justin, in Chinook, Montana. During her years in Chinook, she also served as a member of the local EMS crew, dedicating her time to caring for and assisting others in her community. Her strong work ethic, independence, and compassion were qualities that remained with her throughout her life.

In 1983, Marlene relocated to California, where she began her career with Applied Signal Technology in Sunnyvale. She devoted approximately 25 years to the company and took great pride in her career and accom-

plishments.

Marlene was known for her quick wit, strong personality, and unwavering determination. She possessed a wonderful sense of humor, was never afraid to speak her mind, and had a special way of bringing laughter to those around her.

Although Marlene spent much of her life in California, she always maintained a strong connection to her Montana roots. She valued the friendships she established in both states and especially cherished the years spent near her sister Margie, her son Justin and his wife Lucy, and their children and grandchildren in California. Above all, Marlene treasured her family and the memories they created together.

Among Marlene's many interests, playing cards and Rummikub were two of her greatest enjoyments. Throughout her retirement, she looked forward to the friendly competition, laughter, and time shared around the table with family and friends.

Marlene was preceded in death by her parents, Melvin and

Lona Chapman; and her sisters, Marilee Johnson (Chapman) and Debbie Olson (Chapman).

She is survived by her siblings, Margaret Chapman and Derryl (Judy) Chapman; her three sons, James (Jim Bob) Young, Darryl (Wanda) Young, and Justin (Lucy) Young; her grandchildren, Shawn (Erica), Austin, Maloney (Caleb), Lainey, Lily, Stacy, Tanna, and Riley; her great-grandchildren, Hazel, Avery, Elara, Odin, Barrett, Willow, Jericho, Tyler Jr., and Xander; and many friends and extended family members.

Marlene will be fondly remembered for her quick wit, strong will, and sense of humor. She leaves behind a lifetime of cherished memories and laughter, and every game of cards or Rummikub will serve as a special reminder of her.

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

Ann Faust Bailey
May 13, 1955 — Aug. 17, 2026

Ann Faust Bailey died Aug. 17, 2026, at age 71. She died at home under hospice care, with her immediate family bedside, after a sixteen-year struggle with cancer.

It was a life well lived. Ann was born May 13, 1955, to Don and Margaret Faust, professors of psychology at the Claremont colleges. They lived just two blocks from campus, so Ann and her sisters Katie and Marion were raised in a house with lots of teachers, grad students, and local kids around. Ann's grandparents, Clarence and Gladys Faust, retired in Claremont to live nearby. Ann was raised with a tight-knit, loving family.

Ann's grandparents purchased land at Shaver Lake, California, and in 1955 built a lakeside cabin. Ann grew up spending summers at the Shaver Lake cabin, which included

loads of fun times around the lake, including water skiing in the summer, then snow skiing in the winter. Ann visited the cabin every year of her life, as this is where extended family congregated. This included Don's brothers, Dale and Lyn, and their wives Pam and Sara, and their children, the cousins, Langdon, Leslie, and Kim.

Ann's father, Don, decided that having horses would be a good learning experience for early teens, so Ann and her sister Marion learned to ride and take care of their own horses. Ann's riding skills improved to a level where she competed in barrel racing and participated in competitions up and down the state.

Ann attended Chico State for a degree in Business and Computer programming. This led her to a career spanning the earlier days of business IT of the



1970's, evolving to the IT of the 2020's. She worked for EDS, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, TriValley Growers, Allied Signal, PeopleSoft, and retired from Oracle. At Chico State, she also got the opportunity to attend World Campus Afloat, which meant she spent much of a



year on a cruise liner packed with college students and professors, sailing around the world visiting ports in South America, Africa, India and Asia.

Ann met Stephen Murdoch Bailey in 1980, at the Shaver Lake cabin, during a cousin's wedding reception. Three years

later they were married, and five years later started a family with the arrival of Allison Michelle Bailey. Two years later, Keith Alan Bailey was born, then two years later, Ross Murdoch Bailey. They raised their family in Modesto, California, Midlothian, Virginia, and Livermore, California. Ann's adult life centered on raising and appreciating her children, and for the last few years, her grandchildren.

When a cancer diagnosis is received, all those trips or activities that a person may want to do "someday" get reprioritized. So, when you feel good enough, you go do what is on your list. Which means during these last 16 years, Ann and her extended family went to Club Meds in Cancun and Portugal. The Hunewill Ranch, a dude ranch outside Bridgeport, California, was a place which allowed her to share her love of

horses with her family for several years. However, the Shaver Lake cabin, a home away from home in the Sierras on a lake, is where Ann always liked to go. Her daughter, Allison, living in Northern Norway with her husband Fredrik Haug and granddaughters Iselin and Eva, provided another favorite and frequent destination.

For the last month, so many kind cards have arrived, and in common is the repeated memory of Ann's beaming smile, of her happy laugh, and of her gentle kindness. We miss her so.

Stephen Bailey

Ross Bailey

Keith Bailey, Meghan O'Hearn

Allison Bailey, Fredrik Haug, Iselin and Eva Haug

Katie Faust

Granada Clinches NCS Playoff With Must-Win Over Livermore

By Phil Jensen

LIVERMORE — The Granada High School girls volleyball team faced a must-win match against host Livermore on Oct. 15.

Granada needed a win to secure qualification for consideration of a bid into the North Coast Section playoffs. The Matadors accomplished their mission, defeating Livermore 25-12, 25-15, 25-23.

“I was pleased. We had good energy. We needed to win one more to qualify, so we didn’t want to mess around,” said Granada coach Rich Cortez. “I thought Livermore did a good job of responding in that third set.”

In order to qualify for the NCS girls volleyball playoffs, a team must have an overall record, league record, or NCS division record of at least an equal number of wins and losses. With the victory, Granada improved to 13-12 overall with one regular-season match remaining. Granada is a Division I team. The seeding meeting is Oct. 25.

Livermore has also qualified to be considered for the NCS Division II playoffs due to a 3-0 record against Division II competition entering this week. The Cowboys play

at Kimball-Tracy tonight before ending the regular season at South Tahoe on Saturday.

In their rivalry match on Oct. 15, Granada took early control of the first set on four service points by Kamryn De Ocampo for a 6-2 lead. The Matadors, who finished their East Bay Athletic League regular season with a 6-7 record, built their lead to 17-7 on a kill by De Ocampo, and ended the set with four straight points, including three service points by Izabella De Ocampo.

Kamryn De Ocampo served seven straight points in the second set for an 11-1 Granada lead. She had two aces in that run, and teammate Anabel van Niekerk produced four points on either kills or hits. The junior outside hitter showed good decision-making on whether to tap the ball over the front row or put a full swing on it. Cortez said that successful hitters have that decision-making skill. “Maybe it’s a well-formed block and they are just going to try to tip over it, or they’ll just blast away, but you try to teach them to see the block,” he said.

Granada led by double digits for most of the rest of the second set until an ace by Livermore’s Danielle Penaflor

made the score 24-15. The last point of the set was a kill by van Niekerk.

The third set proceeded much differently, as Livermore led for much of the set. A kill by Siera Baldovino built the Cowboys’ lead to 16-11, but then Granada went on a 5-0 run to tie the score. No more than three points separated the two teams the rest of the way.

Granada had match point at 24-21 on an ace by Sofia Duterte, but Livermore (7-18, 0-13) battled back with two straight points, including a kill by Michelle Headley, before Granada scored the final point of the game.

“They had so much heart. Senior Night is so emotional,” said Livermore coach Lisa Poyneer, who has six seniors on her 14-player roster. “You could see how much it means to them.”

Jordan Barloon produced 20 digs, Marrit Poyneer passed for 13 assists and Headley had five kills for Livermore.

Granada won its regular-season finale in four sets over host Freedom-Oakley on Oct. 16. The Matadors prevailed 25-15, 23-25, 25-20, 25-17 to conclude its regular season with a 14-12 overall record.



Granada High School quarterback Caiden Van Leer (center) keeps an eye on receiver Brayden Hein (right) before firing a touchdown pass to him in the Oct. 16 home game against California High School. (Photo courtesy of Adam J. Clark/Livermore Granada Boosters)

Matadors Look for Turnaround After a Tough Weekend Loss

By Phil Jensen

LIVERMORE — At the end of the first quarter in last Friday’s nonleague game between California High School and host Granada, the two teams matched each other well.

Granada held a 14-13 lead over the Grizzlies. But California dominated the next three quarters to win 62-28.

“We had a great week of practice. Danny (Calcagno, California’s coach) does a great job over there ... they put it on us tonight,” said Granada coach Brandon Black about the loss. “The (Granada) kids work hard, they’re a great group of young men. (California) just got the best of us.”

Granada (2-5) scored its most points against California High since 2012, but it was a five-touchdown spurt in the second and third quarters that put the Grizzlies firmly in control and helped them win their 11th straight game against Granada.

The Matadors now open their EBAL Valley Division schedule on Friday at Dublin (with a 7:15 p.m. scheduled kickoff). The next three games are the most important regular-season games for all four of the Valley Division teams. The division winner will be an automatic qualifier for the North Coast Section playoffs.

“They know what’s at stake,” said Black about his team. “The kids have kept their heads up and kept fighting, working.”

California (5-3) took the opening drive of the game 72 yards for a touchdown, but Granada answered with its best drive of the game. The Matadors moved the ball 75 yards on 10 plays, ending with a well-timed seam pass from Caiden Van Leer to Brayden Hein for a 36-yard touchdown. Gio Perez’s point-after-touchdown kick gave Granada a 7-6 lead, since California missed the PAT kick after the Grizzlies’ touchdown.

In a high-scoring first quarter, California answered back with another long drive, capped by a 20-yard TD pass from Nicco Kovacs to Eli Varanini. With the PAT kick by Bruce Fallgren, the Grizzlies grabbed the lead back at 13-7.

But California didn’t hold that lead for long. On the ensuing kickoff, Granada’s Skyler Stuart burst through a hole in the middle of the field at approximately the Granada 30-yard line, stepped out of a tackle attempt about 30 yards later and raced for a 97-yard touchdown. It was one of two kickoff returns for scores by the junior in the game. The PAT kick by Perez gave Granada a 14-13 lead at

the 2 minute, 1 second mark of the first quarter.

“He’s electric,” said Black about Stuart. “Any time he touches the ball, he could break (a long run), and he showed that tonight.”

But California outscored Granada 21-0 in the second quarter and outgained the Matadors 166-9 in that quarter to lead 34-14 at halftime. The Grizzlies tackled on two more touchdowns in the third quarter before Granada broke the scoring streak. Granada sophomore Stephen Turner scored on a 10-yard run, and he accounted for all 60 yards on the drive. Turner finished with a game-high 88 yards rushing.

The Matadors’ final touchdown was an 88-yard kickoff return by Stuart with 8:26 to go in the game.

California had four players who rushed for more than 50 yards in the game, led by Jonathan Hamm (69 yards, one TD) and Pontus Carlson (69 yards). Kovacs, a transfer from Amador Valley, completed 15 of his 18 passing attempts for 231 yards, four touchdowns and no interceptions.

Note: Dublin, Granada’s opponent this Friday, is also 2-5 after a 24-21 win over visiting Clayton Valley Charter on Oct. 9. The other EBAL Valley Division game this Friday is Foothill (2-4) at Livermore (4-3) at 7:15 p.m.



Granada players jump to block a shot from Livermore's Lilyana Von Roll during their girls volleyball match at Livermore High School on Oct.15. The Matadors swept the match 25-12, 25-15, 25-23 to secure an NCS playoff bid. (Photo—May Fraser)

Opera to Honor Late Artistic Director

LIVERMORE — Livermore Valley Opera (LVO) will honor its former artistic director, Erie Mills, with an “evening of music and remembrance” at the Bankhead Theater on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

Mills, who died in June at the age of 73, had been the opera company’s artistic director since 2016.

“Erie was the north star of this company and gave LVO her artistry, standards and heart,” said Jonathan Kleid, president of the opera company’s board of directors.

Over a 25-year singing

career, Mills performed with the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera in New York, Teatro alla Scala in Italy, the Vienna Staatsoper in Austria, San Francisco Opera and the Santa Fe Opera.

She joined the voice faculty at San Jose State University in 1998, retiring as a full professor of music in 2008.

In 2004, she also became the first woman to join the board of directors of Opera America, a New York-based nonprofit that promotes opera across the country.

Following her death, LVO named Mills as its

artistic director laureate and established the Erie Mills Legacy Fund to continue her artistic vision for the opera company.

The tribute, featuring the LVO orchestra and soloists Avery Boettcher, Eugene Brancoveanu, Christie Conover, Jamie Flora, Bobby Mellon, Courtney Miller and Amy Owens, will begin at 7 p.m. The doors to the Bankhead will open at 6:30 p.m.

The evening is free and open to the public. To RSVP, go to LivermoreValleyOpera.com and click on “A Tribute to Erie Mills.”

ASTEROIDS

(Continued from front page)

in the recent LLNL study, humans could also try to keep the asteroid intact and apply a small force to change its course in a strategy known as deflection.

“With sufficient advance warning, even a very small change in an asteroid’s velocity, potentially as little as one centimeter per second, could be enough to deflect it away from Earth,” Santistevan said. “Generally, deflection benefits from longer lead times, because even a small change in velocity can produce a significant change in

an asteroid’s position over time. Disruption may offer an alternative when there is less time available, although its effectiveness depends on the specific threat scenario.”

Developed in part at LLNL, the new Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile, a telescope with the largest detector ever built, includes as one of its roles the detection of asteroids long before they could hit the Earth.

However, detecting a hazardous rock early is only the first step; figuring out how to neutralize it requires im-

mense computational power.

To achieve asteroid disruption or deflection, lab investigators highlighted the need to bring more high-performance computing to the problem. Even with supercomputers running simulations for as long as 59 continuous days, they gleaned only 145 milliseconds of simulated time. Scientists would need to follow an asteroid’s resulting fragments in simulation much longer to judge if the pieces simply reaccumulate into a dangerous new asteroid.

CONSERVATION

(Continued from front page)

rare Livermore tarplant and the palmate-bracted bird’s beak. The California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, western burrowing owl and vernal pool fairy shrimp also live in the newly protected habitat.

The City of Livermore owns the two parcels and will work with TVC and other partners to manage the properties for conservation

values. The city manages the land for biodiversity and habitat, agriculture and working lands, and climate-change goals, according to the city’s website.

The easements resulted from the mitigation efforts of housing development in Dublin. Trumark Homes served as the permittee for the easements.

“Conservation is a long-

term commitment,” said Diana Roberts, associate director of conservation at TVC. “Our role is to make sure these lands stay thriving ecosystems that stand the test of time. We’re proud to work hands-on to ensure the terms of our easements are upheld, and we have staff out in the field year-round to different properties to do so.”

REBECCA

(Continued from front page)

visitors to the upcoming exhibit encounter something within themselves.

“I have never thought of my paintings simply as something to look at. For me, they are encounters with color, Spirit, story, mystery and Love,” Sister Rebecca said. “I may know what was stirring in me when I painted a particular piece, but I don’t need someone else to see what I see.

“I want the painting to meet them wherever they are. If people leave the exhibit a little more whole, a little more alive, a little more awake to the beauty within themselves, then the paintings have done what I hoped they would do,” she added.

Healing is one of the most beautiful experiences people have expressed to her when they spend time with her paintings. Something inside simply softens, opens, releases, or comes home to itself.

“I don’t believe the painting does the healing as much as it creates a sacred space where something already within the person is able to awaken,” Sister Rebecca said. “Color, image, memory, beauty, and Spirit somehow meet—and healing can happen there.”

A deeply personal work that came from her mind featured a mother deer and her fawn and imagery that reflected Sister Rebecca’s mother.

“When my mom died,

that was my mom’s favorite animal,” she said. “So, I was so consoled by that.”

As for the artistic style of her work, Sister Rebecca prefers not to put herself in a particular box. Rather, her paintings move from realism into impressionism, symbolism, abstraction, and sometimes a combination of several of those in the same piece.

“I would probably say my style is spiritual expression through color,” she said. “I paint what I see, but perhaps even more, I paint what I feel and what I experience within.”

“I grew up with the extraordinary colors of Santa Fe, New Mexico—the earth, mountains, sky, sunsets, adobe, turquoise, brilliant blues, oranges, reds and golds. Those colors got into me very early and apparently decided to stay.”

The power and impact of those colors come through her love of texture, and discovering what paint can do beyond a traditional brushstroke. Through the combination of brushes and palette knives, Sister Rebecca described building layers and allowing texture itself to become part of the expression of a painting. For her, technique is always in service of what the painting is trying to express.

So, whether it is oils or acrylics, there are different personalities of both.

“Sometimes the paint is

smooth and quiet; sometimes it is thick, bold and almost sculptural. I love letting the paint itself become part of the story,” Sister Rebecca said.

While she plans to experiment with new medium in the future, she does not see herself abandoning oils or acrylics. Instead, “(it’s about) discovering what else might happen with them.”

She also hopes visitors to the exhibit will be inspired to pick up a pencil or take a brush and paint to small canvas and express what is inside of them, and not worry about calling themselves artists.

“I have been painting since 1972 (and creating since two), but creativity isn’t about how many years you have practiced. Creativity belongs to all of us,” Sister Rebecca said. “It may come through paint, music, gardening, cooking, sewing, woodworking, writing, arranging flowers, caring for another person, or a hundred other expressions. We are creative beings.”

Sister Rebecca also is celebrating her 60th anniversary as a singer-songwriter and recently released her newest original single, “Yes, Everyone Is Loved”, a musical echo of the same message carried in her paintings. Her original music will gently fill the space throughout the weekend with an occasional song sung live.

New Bookstore Welcomes Women In Wine During TASTE

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE—One of Livermore's newest downtown businesses, Word on the Street Bookstore at 2044 First Street, hosted a literary happy hour on Oct.

15 as one of many at this year's TASTE: Livermore Valley Wine Experience, happening in the region over a four-day period from Oct 14-19.

The sold-out "A Taste of Stories" event was the

creative brainchild of Alex Henkelman, co-owner and co-winemaker at Omega Road Winery, in partnership with bookstore owner Linda Maggi and the Women's Wine Collective of Livermore Valley,

which Henkelman heads.

A curated selection of female-authored books inspired food and wine pairings created by local chefs Tiana Megofna of the Mego Kitchen; Amanda Skog of Beyond the Table; Jill Victor of On the Vine Catering; and Kim Gamble of Lanna Thai; and female-led wineries including Del Valle Winery; JMC Cellars; Rodrigue Molyneaux; McGrail Vineyards & Winery and Retzlaff Vineyards.

It was 3 p.m. on a Friday, and the room was electric with wall-to-wall people — and books — exuberantly talking, laughing and drinking wine.

An excited Henkelman shouted above the din of the crowd.

"You imagine what it could be and then it happens and it's even better."

But Jenny O'Leary, marketing manager for the Livermore Valley Wine Community, knew a good idea when she heard it. "I loved the book idea. That's the one," she told Henkelman, who presented multiple ideas. The TASTE committee agreed

and liked that the idea also incorporated downtown.

"Friday happy hour from here and then you're done, you can go to another event after this," O'Leary said. "The goal is to jump around. Make it a weekend. Visit Livermore for the best time of the year."

That spirit of collaboration and downtown vibrancy was further amplified by Livermore Valley's recent recognition as Wine Enthusiast's 2026 Wine Star Award American Region of the Year.

Bringing that kind of creative community vision to life, Maggi, who started with a little free library in her front yard, then moved on to a bookmobile before opening her storefront in April, said it was fun selecting the books to go with the flights.

"I wanted to pick books that would go with a flight of wine starting with a light white or a rosé all the way to a deep red. The book offerings ranged from a classic rom-com beach novel into more traditional women's fic-

tion each one paired with a wine and a bite inspired by the story. "

Nancy Rodrigue, owner of RM Winery, challenged Maggi to find a book to pair with her winery's Sangiovese. "She said, 'I need a book that starts in Italy.'"

Maggi accepted the challenge. "So I found this one ('Still Life' by Sarah Winman) for her, and she read it and loved it." The RM's 2021 Sangiovese was enjoyed with a pasta e fagioli made by Tiana Megofna of the Mego Kitchen.

"It was so fun," Maggi said. "You can do a lot with books."

Check out lvwine.org for future events.



Linda Maggi, bookstore owner (back row, far left), stands with participating wineries and chefs outside Word on the Street in downtown Livermore for "A Taste of Stories," a sold-out literary happy hour and part of the annual TASTE events celebrating female authors and local culinary and wine pairings on Friday afternoon, Oct. 16. (Photo courtesy of TASTE)

Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day Returns To Downtown Livermore on October 24

By Jessica Zimmer

LIVERMORE—On Saturday, Oct. 24, Livermore Downtown, Inc. welcomes families with children in 5th grade and under to Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day, a free trick-or-treating event between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at participating downtown businesses and Carnegie Park at Third and J Streets. Children can trick-or-treat at local downtown businesses and enjoy live music, games, a costume contest and Halloween-themed kids' activities.

Kara Klotchman, executive director of Livermore Downtown, Inc., said the event draws nearly 4,000 people.

"This is a favorite Halloween tradition for Livermore residents and has been in place for approximately 20 years," she said. "About 40 local businesses will participate."

The first 1,500 trick-or-treaters can pick up a free official Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day bag during the event at Livermorium Plaza and Carnegie Park at either of Marcel Orthodontics' two booths.

"My team and I love com-

ing out and meeting parents and kids. We've been doing this for over 25 years," said Dr. Tom Marcel, orthodontist and owner of Marcel Orthodontics. "I especially enjoy seeing kids that I'm treating at this event."

Savanna Taing, co-owner of Donut Wheel, has passed out full-size donuts at Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day at her business's booth since the 1990s.

"We pass out mostly simple, glazed, chocolate, or with sprinkles. If we run out, we give them a handful of donut holes if we have those left," Taing said.

"Last year we had a Halloween-themed photo booth. That was a big hit. We'll probably do that again," Taing said.

Team Martial Arts, a local martial arts studio, has had a booth at Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day for 18 years.

"Each year we have a game and candy, and decorate with themes like superheroes, Ninja Turtles, or Karate Kid/Cobra Kai," said Amber Taylor, co-owner of Team Martial Arts. "Our instructors and teen leadership students have fun helping with the games and

handing out candy. We love it when our current and former students who train with us come to visit our booth and say hello."

Heritage Estates, a senior community near downtown Livermore, invites kids to come to its campus later that day, between 2 and 4 p.m. Organizers hold an old-fashioned, door-to-door trick-or-treating with residents, handing out candy to anywhere from 50 to 100 kids.

"It's a great time. The kids run around the hallways screaming and laughing," said Elizabeth Sanches, senior apartments property manager at Heritage Estates.

"A lot of parents have questions about the best time to bring their kids in for an orthodontic evaluation. Seeing me face to face allows them to ask questions," Marcel said.

He reminded parents that hard, sticky, or chewy candies are best avoided. Each year after Halloween, his practice hosts a candy buyback, paying \$1 per pound.

"Our practice matches the amount of the buyback. The child can pick one of three nonprofits to donate to: Tri-Valley Haven, Open

Heart Kitchen or Livermore Education Foundation. This is a good way to teach them to give back," Marcel said.

The costume contest for Kidz Town Halloween Hay Day has four categories: infant to age 4, ages 5 to 8, ages 9 to 12, and family/group. Costumes should be at least 70 percent handmade.

For more information and a participating list of businesses, visit: livermoredowntown.com/events/kidz-town-halloween-hay-day.

PROP 44 (Continued from front page)

Prop. 44 to ensure "every dollar in the system be freed up for patient care."

"We've seen excessive CEO pay, lavish events, and other non-essential services take FQHCs away from their mission. These centers should be serving the public. FQHCs specifically focus on serving low-income and uninsured patients. Why don't the executive officers of these clinics want more money to go to patients?" said Saldaña.

Liz Perez-Howe, chief executive officer of Axis Community Health, said community health centers across the state are united against Prop. 44.

A long list of physicians, nurses and patient advocates oppose the measure, including the California Medical Association, the California School Nurses Organization, the California Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics - California, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, and the California Hospital Association.

The California Nurses Association, part of National Nurses United, the largest union and professional association of registered nurses in the U.S., has not taken a position on Prop. 44.

Locally, the East Bay Leadership Council (EBLC), an employer-led public policy advocacy organization in Contra Costa and Alameda counties,

opposes Prop. 44.

Meg Stern, EBLC policy director, said the organization fears spending requirements could limit investment in essential operations like workforce development, technology, and training.

"EBLC is concerned that additional constraints could make it more difficult for community health centers to maintain and expand access to care...Consequences could also extend well beyond community health centers, pushing more patients into already strained hospitals and emergency departments," Stern said.

Possible Penalties for FQHCs

If passed, any FQHC spending more than 10% on non-administrative expenses would face a California Attorney General penalty equal to the amount needed to reach the 90% minimum.

"If Prop. 44 passes, health centers across California, including ours, will be forced to cut services, and some will close their doors," Perez-Howe said, adding that Axis Community Health has no current plan for Tri-Valley service cuts.

Saldaña called Perez-Howe's statement inaccurate and misleading.

"It might be worth asking the 'No on Prop 44' campaign to point you to the language in the measure that limits the 90 percent to 'patient services,'

said Saldaña. "They will be unable to do so. While the phrase appears in the measure's findings and statement of intent, it is never defined and plays no part in the ratio calculation."

Perez-Howe countered that proponents relied on an arbitrary tax form rather than drafting specific protections.

"Form 990s were never intended to provide an exact breakdown of patient and mission-directed services," Perez-Howe said. "Clinics vary greatly in which services and expenses they include in line 4e. As such, Form 990s are not a reliable or responsible metric to calculate mission-directed spend and Prop. 44's severe financial penalties."

Marsha McInnis, president of National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Tri-Valley, is still considering her vote.

"We have a strong relationship with Axis Community Health. Many of the families to which our staff offers counseling and programs go to their clinics," McInnis said.

However, McInnis wants more transparency on revenue percentages dedicated to management versus patient services.

"I can tell you that there needs to be an alternate strategy other than relying on the federal government for dollars to support the most vulnerable members of our community," McInnis said.

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