

Investigation Underway on Maintenance Worker Death

By Larry Altman

DUBLIN — Police were awaiting autopsy results this week to determine whether a strong pain killer responsible for a rise in overdose deaths across the nation caused the death of a maintenance worker Dec. 23 at Fallon Middle School in Dublin.

Police said the drug fentanyl was found at the scene.

The victim, James Covington, 32, of Pittsburg, died shortly after he and a 29-year-old woman, identified as his fiancée, were discovered unconscious at 7 a.m. in the campus library, police said.

Dublin police officers went to the campus to investigate a missing persons' report. The couple, who had two young children — at least one of them together — had failed to return home from their Tuesday evening maintenance shift from 3 to 8 p.m., Dublin police Capt. Nate Schmidt said.

Officers found a car belonging to the pair parked outside the school, then lo-

(See INVESTIGATION, page 9)

County Backs Reparations, Mental Health Involvement

By Ron McNicoll

REGIONAL — On the heels of a Contra Costa County declaration, Alameda County supervisors laid out plans to deal with institutional racism.

Alameda supervisors have not linked racism to public health, as have those in Contra Costa, but they have taken an approach that tries to arrive at the "same destination," said Supervisor Nate Miley, who wrote a plan for the county. His Fourth District includes Pleasanton, as well as Castro Valley and parts of Oakland.

Alameda County is refining a formal apology for the wrongs of slavery, paying reparations through programs that would benefit black businesses and other institutions, and splitting mental health services away from police duties as much as possible, so that mental health issues in apparent offenders can be dealt with appropriately, according to Miley.

Richard Valle — District 2 supervisor whose territory includes parts of Sunol and Fremont as well as Hayward and Union City — has been meeting informally with police chiefs and the sheriff's office to talk about what mental health services the county might provide. The effort aims to keep officers focused on policing actions. Valle told the board on Oct. 6 that some situations don't need police presence. Instead, bringing in county-funded mental health professionals would be a good use of resources.

Keith Carson, the county's other black supervisor, is helping Miley with program details. His district includes Berkeley, Albany and a part of Oakland.

Carson thanked Miley at the board's Oct. 6 meeting

(See REPARATIONS, page 10)



Earlier this year, Ricky Watts worked on the Second Street side of the Cal Water building as part of the Only Up Mural Festival. To see more of The Independent's 2020 year in review photos, see page 6. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Group Launches Campaign to Gain Support for Alternative Eden Housing Plan

LIVERMORE — A new group called Save Downtown Livermore has worked with lawyers, an architect and an appraiser to form

as the Lucky site, moved across Railroad Avenue to the parcels just north of it.

Save Downtown Livermore stated that the Liver-

"These changes will dramatically increase the affordable housing footprint in our city center, signifi-

"The community must ask Eden Housing to study seriously the alternative option, and leave behind the plan that would damage the character of our downtown."

what its members believe is a viable alternative to the downtown Eden Housing development plan.

The group aims to see the 130 housing units currently proposed for the downtown location, known

more City Council's Dec. 7 workshop unveiled design plans for the area — bound by L Street, Railroad Avenue, Livermore Avenue and Veterans Way — that were "drastically different" from those the public had been shown since 2018.

cantly reduce open space between the buildings, and provide inadequate parking that fails to meet city standards," stated the press release submitted by Ruth Gasten, Save Downtown Livermore spokesperson.

(See EDEN, page 11)

Council Approves Decreased Fees and Design Plan for Public Storage Project

By Aly Brown

PLEASANTON — Steps for an expansion of a Public Storage facility on Stanley Boulevard recently moved ahead.

In a Dec. 15 public hearing, the council approved a reduction to the Affordable Housing Fees from \$2.2 million to \$137,000, along with the project's design plans.

With the approval of the design and conditional use permit, the applicant will demolish seven existing storage buildings and an office located at 3716 Stanley Blvd. to construct a 900 square-foot office, a 9,750 square-foot one-story storage building and a 197,410 square-foot three-story stor-

age building. The project will also plant trees to provide a buffer and construct and maintain a nearby trail.

Both decisions were made in 3-1 votes, with Vice Mayor Kathy Narum dissenting each time. Councilmember Jack Balch abstained due to his involvement on the project as a planning commissioner.

The lengthy hearing and subsequent decisions were the culmination of three years' worth of planning and revisions to the design. The planning commission's 4-1 approval of the applications in October were later appealed by Councilmember Julie Testa, who stated the designs were not in line with the city's general plan. The applicant provided staff with

updated plans on Dec. 8.

"I'm very pleased with the changes that have happened and how rapidly it was done," Testa said during the Dec. 15 meeting. "I do not believe this project a couple of weeks ago was what our community deserved."

Narum's "no" vote to approve the design followed her statement about a lack of opportunity to obtain community input. She further pointed out concerns of public speakers from the nearby Irby Ranch homes, who said three-story buildings would block scenic views. Residents Devang Adraru and Mithria, along with some of their neighbors, cited additional issues to include

(See STORAGE, page 10)

Holiday Travel Expected To Drive Covid-19 Surge

By Tony Kukulich

REGIONAL — As the plans for vaccinating California's 40 million residents begin to take shape, Gov. Gavin Newsom warned that the most difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic may still lie ahead.

"We likely will experience in two weeks — 10, 14 or 18 days from now — this surge stacked on top of these other surges related to holiday activities," he said.

Covering a wide range of topics related to the pandemic during a Dec. 28 press conference, Newsom expressed concern over the high number of holiday travelers and the impact that travel is expected to have on

the pandemic in the coming weeks.

Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary for the California Department of Health and Human Services, echoed those concerns.

"We certainly anticipate that the middle of January is going to be a pretty difficult time in our hospitals, where the cases from this week and next week really start to stack on top of one another impacting the emergency rooms, our hospital wards and our (intensive care unit) wards," Ghaly said.

Ghaly announced Tuesday, Dec. 29 that shelter-in-place orders in the Southern California and San Joaquin Valley regions will remain

(See SURGE, page 12)

Council Expands Safe Gun Storage Requirements

By David Chircop

DUBLIN — Gun owners in Dublin will soon be required to take additional measures to secure firearms inside their homes under a new city ordinance that seeks to curb access to firearms and reduce the risk of unintentional shootings and firearm suicides.

The Dublin City Council unanimously approved the safe storage firearms ordinance on Dec. 1. It requires unattended firearms in Dublin homes to be secured with a state-approved trigger lock engaged or kept within a gun safe or locked container. A violation of the ordinance constitutes a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six

months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. The ordinance takes effect Jan. 14.

"This ordinance will state clearly to our community that we embrace a culture of gun safety," Vice Mayor Shawn Kumagai said.

The ordinance was introduced at his request, following an October presentation by the Giffords Law Center To Prevent Gun Violence.

The city council also directed city staff to explore opportunities to obtain grant funding to purchase gun locks that could be offered to Dublin residents without charge, similar to one administered by the Fremont Police Department.

The ordinance comes at

(See GUN, page 10)

Tri-Valley Mourns Loss of Teenagers Killed in Crash

By Larry Altman

LIVERMORE — As many Tri-Valley residents mourned the loss, police continued this week to investigate a horrific crash that killed a young man and his two teenage companions in Livermore four days before Christmas.

The victims — driver Rahul Brar, 18, who went to Vineyard High School; his cousin, Shej Kumar, and friend, Ian Ericksen, both 16 and juniors at Livermore High School — died following the Dec. 21 crash in the 5600 block of Las Positas Road.

"We are slowly coming to terms with it," said Brar's older brother, Anthony Kumar. "It was just an innocent drive home."

As he often did, Brar had just picked up his cousin and friend from a Baskin-Robbins ice cream shop, where they worked, and was headed home at 10:30 p.m. Shej, originally from Stockton, lived with Brar's family in Livermore. His close friend, Ian, lived with his family down the street.

Kumar said Brar often took the freeway, but this time chose to drive along Las Positas Drive. Headed east in an older model Mercedes Benz, Brar drove under the trailer of a big rig, whose driver had made an illegal turn into a driveway, police said.

"The trailer was blocking the roadway, and the 'no left turn' sign was the standard street sign enforced by law enforcement and requiring rules of the road for drivers," Livermore Police Department Sgt. Steve Goard said.

A makeshift memorial of votive candles, flowers, crosses, metallic balloons, stuffed animals and a skateboard grew at the crash site. Another developed at the Baskin-Robbins store on First Street where Ian had worked for a year. Shej started his job about a month ago.

"It has been really tough," manager Gabriela Griffith said. "The kids in my group here; it's small. All of them are really good friends. We are very close."

Visitors, including teachers from Livermore's high schools, where the younger boys attended, offered condolences and dropped money in a collection bowl in the store. Griffith said she spoke highly of Ian when his parents stopped by. She called him a "very honest kid."

"I'm very picky with the people that I hire," Griffith said. "He was an amazing kid. I was telling the mom she did an amazing job with him. I never had to tell him what to do. He was very professional, very funny. He had a nice sense of humor."

Griffith said she hired (See CRASH, page 10)



A roadside memorial at the 5600 block of Las Positas Road in Livermore was set up at the site of a fatal accident that claimed the lives of three teenagers on Dec. 22. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)



ROBYN

PET OF THE WEEK

Robyn is a female bully mix puppy. Puppies are a handful but they can bring your family lots of joy and years of companionship. If your New Year's resolution is to add a canine to your household, check out Robyn and other adoptable dogs at valleyhumane.org. While Valley Humane Society remains closed during shelter-in-place, adoptions are coordinated by appointment. For more information, contact info@valleyhumane.org.

(Photo - Valley Humane Society / J. Sampat)

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SNLV Issues Statement on Aramis Solar Appeal Hearing Extension

Following Alameda County's decision to push the Aramis Solar Energy Generation and Storage appeal hearing to February, advocacy group Save North Livermore Valley (SNLV) issued the following statement: "We are pleased that Intersect Power will no longer

be allowed to rush the review of its massive Aramis industrial solar power plant proposed for the scenic North Livermore Valley, an area specifically designated by voters for the preservation of agriculture and open space," SNLV Steering Committee Chair

Chris O'Brien wrote, referring to Aramis applicant, Intersect Power. "We also support Supervisor-elect David Haubert's common sense approach to solar in East County. Supervisor-elect Haubert called for 'a moratorium on the review of new solar plants on agricul-

tural land until the County completes a comprehensive study and mapping project on the appropriate siting, scale, and operation of solar power plants, if any, on agricultural land, and incorporates this work in a solar ordinance and General Plan Amendment.' Haubert's po-

sition helps ensure that we do not destroy the environment in our effort to save it. "Furthermore, Haubert's stance protects the will of Alameda County voters. Converting eastern Alameda County's agricultural lands into industrial zones for the electricity generation – as

Intersect desires – clearly violates voter-approved initiative Measure D. We look forward to working with Supervisor-elect Haubert and his new colleagues on the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to defend Measure D's environmental protections."

Foundation Gives Holiday Gift Bags to Kids in Local Head Start Program



Rotarians distributed 125 gifts to children in Livermore. (Photo - Rotarian Foundation)

Christmas came in a different package this year for youngsters from the local Head Start program.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the Rotarian Foundation of Livermore distributed 125 holiday gift bags in place of its annual children's party usually held in early December.

The Rotarians worked with the Community Association for Preschool Education to identify 125 needy children, from 3 to 5 years old, who are enrolled in the nonprofit's Head Start programs.

Each gift bag included a sweatshirt, socks, crayons,

number and alphabet pads, puzzles, and a soccer ball. Each child was also able to select two books and a stuffed animal.

Donations from the Inner Wheel auxiliary of Rotary paid for the books and Good

News Bears, a Livermore nonprofit that provides teddy bears to hurt or abused children and adults, donated the stuffed animals.

Each child's family also received a \$10 Target gift card.

happy new year

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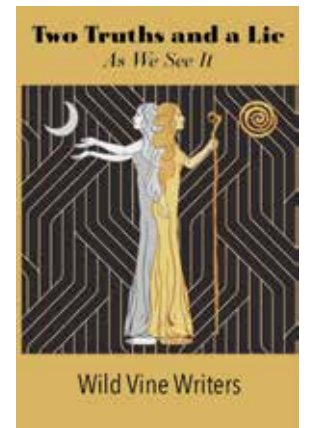
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Writing Group Publishes Book for a Good Cause

By Dawnmarie Fehr

The Wild Vine Writers — a group of women authors based in Livermore — recently published its second book with a goal of helping their community.



The authors worked together over Zoom during the pandemic to create, polish and publish "Two Truths and a Lie." The book is a collection of short stories, essays and poetry. All proceeds will go toward the Connie Clark Memorial Scholarship Fund for reentry students at Chabot College. Clark was a member of the Wild Vine Writers before her passing. "Some of (Clark's) writing is in this book, and she very quietly polished it up and made it publishable before she died," explained Linda Milanese, an original charter member.

Author Julie Orvis noted Clark's death in October 2019 was hard on the group, pausing their work on the book. They had picked up their pens once more in March when the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything.

"Prior to COVID, we met once a month," said contributor Peggy Schimmelman. "Then because of the book, we decided we should meet weekly, and it proved to really be a focal point through COVID for me. It was something to look forward to every week. It was social contact . . . along with all the writing, so it really has helped me get through the COVID phase."

The rest of the group expressed similar sentiments, noting that focusing on their book helped them come through a difficult year and bring them all closer together, despite not meeting in person.

"Once a week, we could actually escape reading the headlines," said Danielle Cunningham, who joined the Zoom meetings from her home in Scotland. "You can write about COVID and what's going on inside yourself 100%, but these meetings okayed us not to think about it for an hour or two; it was ok not to stress about it, it was ok not to feel sad about it."

Author Carla Hanson is one of the founding members. A former high school English teacher in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, she began the writing group in 2007, and they have now published two books together.

"You know, with a group like that, people join and go away, but this particular group has been writing together for four years," Hanson said. "I am a certified Amherst Writers and Artists writing facilitator, and that's a wonderful protocol for writing, and we follow the guidelines in our group."

The group dubbed itself the Wild Vine Writers before publishing its first book in 2017, "Long Stories Short," a collection of stories of 100 words or less. Proceeds from that title went toward purchasing books for Tri-Valley Haven. The tradition of giving has been continued in the group's new publication.

The group finished "Two Truths and a Lie" over the summer and published in August. With their book making its way into hands and onto shelves, the Wild Vine Writers is taking some time before launching their next project. They are still a group of six, as Clark's spot was recently filled with a new face, and they will con-

tinue to meet one morning a week for writing prompts and companionship. But no definite plans have been made for a third title.

"We are friends, so the couple hours we spend on Zoom each week has been wonderful," said Orvis. "Then you walk away from that and it gives you focus and a project that's positive to work on during the week and you feel productive in a time when things are hard."

The women developed questions for book club discussion of the pieces in the anthology. For more information, visit jockorivewriters.org/wild-vine-writers. Books are also available at Towne Center Books, 2375 Railroad Ave., Suite 100, in Livermore. Call 925-292-5200 for more information.

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Croce Elementary Scout Earns Bronze Award

Katelyn Storm, a fifth grader at Croce Elementary School in Livermore and a member of Troop 31209, has completed work on her Girl Scout Bronze Award by installing two bat boxes at Sycamore Grove Park.

The boxes were installed near the group picnic area and ranger station off Arroyo Road. Providing homes for the bats helps control mosquitos and other insects and aids in the nocturnal pollination of flowering plants.

The Bronze Award is the third highest award in the Girl Scout program and the highest award that a Girl Scout Junior, in grades 4-5, can earn.

Pleasanton Senior Receives Highest Scout Rank



Connor Layton

Connor Layton, a member of Troop 924 in Pleasanton, has received his Eagle Badge, the highest rank awarded by the Boy Scouts of America.

Layton, a senior at Granada High School in Livermore, joins his brother, Ryan, who earned the rank of Eagle as a member of Troop 931 in 2017. According to BSA, only 4% of all Scouts reach the rank of Eagle.

Connor Layton was also a member of Troop 931 in Livermore, where he completed most of his requirements for Eagle, before transferring to Troop 924 in 2019.

Eagle Scouts must earn 21 merit badges and com-

plete a community service project. For his project, Layton led volunteers from both Troop 931 and Troop 924 in building three nesting owl boxes, five raptor roost perches, and a kestrel box for a ranch owner in Contra Costa County.

The project was completed in November 2019 and Layton passed his Board of Review in April, but he did not receive his Eagle award until this month.

Layton plans to attend Las Positas College next fall.

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Relief Bill Includes Three of Rep. Swalwell's Proposals

Three proposals authored by Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) were included in the \$2.3 trillion government spending and coronavirus relief bill passed by Congress last week and signed by President Trump on Sunday.

According to Swalwell's office, he authored an amendment allocating \$10 million for training in 2021 under the federal Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) program, which could benefit workers at the Lawrence Livermore

National Laboratory. Swalwell also authored language in the bill directing the Department of Energy to develop a program to ensure a strong domestic supply of Energy Critical Elements, rare earth minerals and other chemicals necessary for the production of new energy technologies.

The third proposal from Swalwell was an amendment encouraging development of a student loan repayment program for anyone recruited or currently working for a government intelligence agency.

Supervisor Haggerty Breaks Ground to House the Homeless



Supervisor Scott Haggerty

Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty is pioneering a new approach to the homeless crisis by building a stable, supportive community that addresses the causes of homelessness in a way that uplifts the dignity of each individual, according to Kim Curtis, executive director of the project.

Goodness Village is a community of 28 independent tiny homes located at the CrossWinds Church property in Livermore. Calling on the expertise of local and regional experts to address the causes of homelessness, the tiny home village is the result of a multi-year effort to create effective permanent solutions that address the specific needs of Livermore residents.

The program will offer 24-hour mental and physi-

the homeless population within the Tri Valley or in the county as a whole, the hope is that this will provide a model. Built in collaboration between Haggerty, CrossWinds Church, the City of Livermore, HomeAid, and countless private businesses and volunteers, Goodness Village is already being used as a model for neighboring communities. It has also sparked the imagination of youth.

Goodness Village is the site of an Eagle Scout project, and the Livermore High School Engineering Academy is looking at ways to expand the concept to address the needs of more Livermore residents.

Initial funding for the project came from Haggerty's office and has received extensive support from the

"Our community members experiencing homelessness are our neighbors. They were our neighbors before they lost their homes and continue to be our neighbors in these turbulent times."
— Scott Haggerty

cal health support, crisis management, and full wrap-around services including case management. An outdoor barbecue pavilion, orchard, walking paths, and a creek are available to residents of the community, as well. A community garden that will provide food for local food banks, an arts program, vocational training and a mentorship program will provide opportunities for residents to be engaged in meaningful activity, employment, or to develop their own craft.

A program that builds beds for kids is also already underway on-site.

"There is a deep necessity in our community for a program like this" said Haggerty. "I'm glad we are able to start addressing this need in the Tri-Valley. Our community members experiencing homelessness are our neighbors. They were our neighbors before they lost their homes and continue to be our neighbors in these turbulent times."

The vast majority of people experiencing homelessness, families and individuals, are from our own community. The Point in Time count shows that around 83% of people experiencing homelessness in our region were living in Alameda County for over a year before losing their housing, with 57% of individuals living in the region for over 10 years.

While 28 people may be a small percentage of

City of Livermore, as well as numerous private businesses and volunteers. Building the project on church property also helps reduce the cost of the program. In the long run, the Goodness Village model seeks to be financially independent and self-sustaining.

Chris Coli, Senior Pastor at CrossWinds Church, said, "We're excited to work with our county and our city as we band together with other churches, synagogues and mosques to open our hearts and allow the goodness within us all to shine out and lift up our community together."

"Housing instability has reached a level of crisis. This has become increasingly clear during the pandemic, and we are still awaiting the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic" said Haggerty. "One of the things we have learned during this crisis is the important role of stabilization in successfully transitioning out of homelessness. We recognize that people's circumstances are different; some people need a few months to get back on their feet, while others will require ongoing support. Communities need to work together to address these different needs. Partnerships like these work."

Goodness Village has already received 33 referrals from local nonprofits, street outreach teams, families of unsheltered individuals, and the Homeless Services Liaisons from the Livermore and Pleasanton Police Departments.

SEE FOR YOURSELF

DRASTIC CHANGES TO EDEN HOUSING PLAN WOULD DEGRADE LIVERMORE'S DOWNTOWN

What we were promised:
This is the City's Downtown Plan that residents have been shown for several years.



Drastic changes proposed this month:
At the City Council's Dec. 7th workshop, Eden Housing made public this harmful revision.



- 42% increase in footprint for 3- and 4-story affordable housing buildings.
- 32% shrinking of park between the buildings.
- No workforce housing – all units for low income, very low income or homeless.
- Inadequate parking that does not meet the City standard.

A better and realistic alternative is available.



- More affordable housing, but moved out of the City Center
- Larger, creative downtown park
- Retention very likely of Eden Housing \$14.4M Alameda County A1 loan
- Promising land acquisition schedule
- Identified income sources that cover land costs
- Satisfaction of legal requirements, city density and parking regulations

Let's all get behind a plan that could increase the number of affordable units, could provide much needed teacher and staff housing, and create an imaginative park in the heart of our downtown, a gathering place for the whole community.

For further information
email: SaveDowntownLivermore@gmail.com

AD PAID FOR BY SAVE DOWNTOWN LIVERMORE

EDITORIAL Consider Installing the COVID-19 App

With the recent announcement of CA Notify, a new COVID-19 tracking application, it's natural to be a little skeptical about adding this type of technology to your phone.

After all, we've learned a lot of safety tips throughout the digital age about sharing personal information. A device that alerts you to others who have tested positive for COVID-19 should also make you question whether it's sharing your medical or otherwise personal information.

According to the government site, all of your information is protected.

Here's how it works. Your personal data is never shared — not your name, your location, your contact information, nor the identity of those you've been in contact with. Once you activate CA Notify, all you do is keep your Bluetooth on. You will only receive alerts if you were in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19. If another CA Notify user you've

been near in the last two weeks tests positive for COVID-19 and adds their unique, anonymous verification code to the app, you'll get an anonymous notification that you have potentially been exposed.

If you test positive, the California Department of Public Health allows you to activate the notification process with a code. When you choose to activate this function, any phones that were within 6 feet of you for 15 minutes or more during your infectious period can receive a notice of a possible exposure. The notification will tell the other users the date of their exposure, but does not include information about location, time or identity.

Information is powerful. If you can learn early of a possible COVID-19 exposure, you can also obtain a test early and make the proper preparations. For the elderly, pregnant or those with serious health conditions, this warning system could save a life. Consider installing this tech.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines: Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are required to have the name(s) of the person(s) submitting them, city of residence and phone number, for verification purposes. Abusive letters may be rejected or edited. Letters are subject to verification and may be edited for clarity at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to decide whether or not the letter will be published. Headlines for all letters may be edited at the discretion of the editor to properly reflect their content. A headline will be added to letters received without one. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed. Letters must be submitted by someone living in or from the Tri-Valley; they must not offer medical advice from unconfirmed professional sources or contain libelous or inappropriate content. Letters should be limited to 400 words or less and should be sent by email to letters@independentnews.com or submitted using the form below. To be considered, letters must be received by 10 a.m. on the Tuesday before publication.

Make East Avenue Safer

Richard Hughes, Livermore

Regarding this whole 'tragic accident involving Yaneli Morales' and the response from the City of Livermore:

Yaneli Morales was 26 years old, looking at her cell phone, crossing East Avenue after dark, not 'looking to the left, looking to the right, looking to the left again,' and not crossing at a designated crosswalk! LPD did not even cite the driver! I wonder why?!

The facts are the facts! The truth is the truth! Painful as it is, yes? So, how about some advice to the City of Livermore officials, regarding a different approach to this terrible incident:

1) Put out an all points bulletin (APB), through Nextdoor, through mailed brochures, through emails, through TV, through Facebook, and on your City of Livermore website, to all the citizens of Livermore, regarding a more effective and safer for your children parenting strategy.

"If you are a parent, before your child reaches the age of 5, please teach them to look to the left, look to the right, look to the left again, cross only at a des-

ignated crosswalk, press the crosswalk button if one is available, do not be looking at your cell phone (!), and only cross when it is absolutely safe."

And then add the following strong suggestion, "Please teach this fundamental concept regarding street safety, to your child, again at age 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21, or until they leave home, especially the part about not looking at your cell phone!"

2) By all means, of course, paint the crosswalks on East Avenue in fluorescent yellow (not just white), add the yellow extra-bright LED flashing lights (which are activated by the crosswalk button) along each and every crosswalk on East Avenue, even add a couple of traffic lights that are activated to go to red when a person wants to cross (for example, at Jensen Avenue) and the crosswalk lights start flashing also, install those solar-powered, extra-bright street lights on each and every available lamp post along East Avenue, think about lowering the speed limit on East Avenue to 25 mph at Jensen Avenue, have more LPD officers watch for speeders on East Avenue, and give out more speeding tickets!

That's a lot of awesome and very effective things that can be done to make East Avenue more safe, rather quickly, yes?

A Benefit For All

Anne Marie Etesse, Livermore

We all would benefit from a park downtown - it would draw people, would be profitable for businesses and would benefit the environment.

This could be accomplished if the location of Eden Housing Project could be amended and moved across the street to the North. People are naturally attracted to nature, and this park would illustrate Livermore citizens' priorities which are to value nature, for us, our children, and our pets.

The Covid Question

Phyllis Couper, Pleasanton

People are upset, angry, and frightened. There is no solid direction coming from anywhere on this virus. There are no verifiable documents to peruse. It's all been verbal dictate. There is no empathy from the government or health departments for those who have lost their jobs and businesses, because they still get a paycheck.

No wonder the young people brush it off and go on with their lives. There is no

sold base to help them cope.

Mandates to wear face masks and practice social distancing are egregious violations of our First Amendment rights, thus are illegal. The word essential applies to our daily lives, our jobs, our children's educations, (and) our health. All depend on the continuation of our daily essentials. Peaceful demonstrations being allowed includes our legal, constitutional right and need to resume these daily essential activities.

The Department of Justice recently issued a statement of interest brief, "There is no pandemic exception, however, to the fundamental liberties the Constitution safeguards. Indeed, "individual rights secured by the Constitution do not disappear during a public health crisis."

These individual rights, including the protections in the Bill of Rights made applicable to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment, are always in force and restrain government action."

Governor Newsom's meet (sic) in close proximity with no masks for at least four hours demonstrates the falseness of dictates issued on Californians that masks, distancing, and imprisonment in homes will stop Covid-19. If he believed people are spreaders, why did he dine, unprotected, with a large group of people, and not quarantine them and (himself)?

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that less than 1% of people will die from Covid-19, and 98.8% will have mild or no symptoms at all. A letter signed by hundreds of doctors was sent to President Trump pointing out that the draconian dictates from the governor are causing far-reaching disasters for treating non-Covid illnesses, in loss of income and emotional stress beyond the norm.

Professor David Nabarro, special envoy for the WHO, stated that the WHO does not advocate lock downs, which are causing widespread destruction and deaths.

We need understanding, but we also need personal (sic) research to find the actual facts of this virus for ourselves. The lack of providing provable, factual reporting on Covid-19 by government and medical officials has proven untrustworthy.

Housing Units or a Park?

Jan Brovont, Livermore

The number of the Eden Housing units on the old Lucky lot has jumped from 84 to 130, causing much less open space.

With the Eden housing on the north side of Railroad Avenue, we could all enjoy a much larger downtown park. How?

Residents should not have to consider hiring legal counsel and filing a lawsuit to force their own county to follow its general plan and zoning code.

We need our new Supervisor David Haubert to bring common sense to the planning process. He needs to press the pause button the Aramis and Sunwalker solar projects.

A sound plan for expanding renewable energy in the county should be developed prior to the review of these massive facilities. Otherwise, we will destroy hundreds of acres of productive agricultural land and open space used by wildlife including threatened species in North Livermore Valley without knowing that there were other locations in the county for solar power plants that would not have caused grave environmental damage.

They could take the kids to the Science Museum; teach them some of the history of how Livermore started by showing them the Stockmen's Park statue. This larger park would be ideal for art shows, wine events and much more. It would draw people downtown, which would help the downtown restaurants and shops.

What would it be like with 130 housing units in two buildings, one four story and the other three stories on the old Lucky land instead?

Public Spaces and Social Fabric

Veronica Stewart, Livermore

The trials and tribulations of the year 2020 have laid bare many things - most unsettling are the divisions and polarized positions within the community. We need ways to maintain connections and create new ones, which weave the disparate threads of various groups of people together in a stronger social fabric.

City management plays an important role in creating an environment where residents interact in positive ways. One way is the use of a sophisticated approach to planning and designing public spaces with social goals in mind.

We have an opportunity to do this in our downtown project area with a cleverly designed public space. We already have a successful example in our beloved Lizzie Fountain - families gather there for kids to play, and they find themselves enjoying the company of strangers.

Contra Costa County Got It Right

Fritz Redeker, Livermore

If you fail to plan, you're planning to fail. That sums up the approach the Alameda County Planning Department has taken in regard to expanding renewable energy in North Livermore Valley. The planning department is working with private energy companies to convince policy makers that two utility scale solar power plants should be constructed on land reserved for agriculture before undertaking an analysis and mapping of the appropriate locations, if any, for these massive solar facilities in rural areas of the county.

Two years ago, planning staff in Contra Costa County advised its Board of Supervisors on how much renewable energy (solar, wind, biomass, biogas) could be generated within the county, how much that might cost, and what were the constraints and tradeoffs. The county then created standards and guidelines, along with designating specific areas, for utility scale solar plants in rural areas.

What Contra Costa County did is the exact opposite of what is occurring in Alameda County today. Contra Costa County got it right. Alameda County is creating a crisis in North Livermore Valley.

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the downtown can be topped off with a unique public space that will strengthen our community. We still have time to make our downtown amazing.

Win-Win Still Possible

Don Maroney, Livermore

"Don't listen what people say watch what they do," is an old adage applicable to the contentious downtown development project.

Unless the good citizens of Livermore express their concerns now, it will be too late.

We were told a win-win solution, balancing affordable housing with the aesthetics of a beautiful city center park and amenities, could be attained. But now, the latest Eden Housing plans call for an increase of 42% of housing space, thereby diminishing the open space.

This is not just a rounding error and cannot be shoved off as a minor change. The revised plan is fundamentally different and must be halted.

Immediate action must be taken by the citizens of this city to voice support to move the affordable housing to the off-site option that has been articulated in the so-called 'win-win' solution. Extensions on the use of the \$14 million county funds can be attained, or more importantly, a revised plan can be submitted, moving the housing off site and return to the 2018 plan before the 2022 deadline.

If this revised plan is implemented, the downtown will be altered forever with a misrepresented 42% mistake. Wake up Livermore, and let the mayor and city council know that a win-win solution is still achievable, and this is what the residents want to happen.

Some Things Aren't Canceled

Glenn Stewart, Livermore

The last I heard, not everything is cancelled.

The sun is not cancelled, spring is not cancelled, relationships are not cancelled, reading is not cancelled, devotion is not cancelled, music is not cancelled, imagination is not cancelled, kindness is not cancelled, conversations are not cancelled, and hope is not cancelled!

The Valley

Barbara Savoy, Livermore

What a beautiful valley we have with the surrounding rolling hills and fields.

It's a step back in time, a quiet time. Where the clouds reach down from Heaven and touch the hills so very gently in the morning mists and the sun shines down and warms the rich earth all around. Where cows and horses graze the rich land God gave us, and ranches are gathered here and there in the valley and hills where families have gathered for eons of time.

Wildlife is in abundance; birds of all types sing their songs as they fly the sky. Sometimes, rain cascades

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

THE Independent

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Bianca Camello, No. 5, is seen here during a game between Las Positas Hawks and Chabot Community College on Feb. 12, 2020. (File photo)

By Matt Schwab

Las Positas College women's basketball coach Clarence Morgan is impressed with Bianca Camello's dazzling production on the court, and her humility. As a freshman sensation in 2019, Camello averaged 23.4 points a game to rank No. 2 in the state in scoring. She tacked on seven

rebounds, four assists and over two steals a game.

Even still, Camello would score 30 and then apologize for not doing enough.

"She's fantastic, and we were lucky to have her," Morgan said.

Now, the 5-foot-7 Camello is aiming for another productive season with the

Camello of Las Positas College Impresses on Court

Hawks during an awkward time for student-athletes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Competitors are experiencing online courses, virtual recruiting trips and modified workouts. The season has been pushed back to the spring and some schools may still opt out for public safety reasons.

Everything seems turned on its head, but Camello is holding it together.

"(I'm) doing OK," she said. "Can't complain; I'm healthy, I'm going to school and finishing up. Just a little stressed, but nothing too major."

Camello, a Salesian College Prep graduate and Oakland resident, sees some positives in the experience.

"I would say it's a blessing in disguise — you get to work on your craft as much as you can," she says. "There's downfall. There's no gyms open or courts, but it definitely allows you to be creative in how you work and elevate your game."

Camello's goal is to play at a higher level, whether it's Division II, Division I or NAIA. She's been in contact with Oklahoma Panhandle

State University, wants to get a degree in kinesiology and maybe become a physical therapist.

Morgan says Camello wound up at Las Positas after he cut a business trip to Las Vegas short to recruit her after he heard a glowing recommendation from her father's friend.

"I flew back and met her and her dad (John)," Morgan said. "Solid family. Great high school program. She already knew how to work hard."

Morgan says Camello somewhat fell off the radar in high school after suffering knee injuries as a junior, so she used her senior year mostly to rehabilitate.

Looking back on her Salesian experience, Camello says she had a lot of injuries from being a tough player.

"I didn't play a lot in high school, but from practices to the games I did play in, I definitely took those experiences and learned from them," she said.

She mentions basketball superstar Sabrina Ionescu, a former Miramonte High and Oregon basketball star now

with the WNBA's New York Liberty, as a role model.

"She comes from the Bay, and she works hard," Camello said. "I've played against her, and watched her play and elevate her game, so just seeing how she works. (She's) definitely a role model."

The Hawks had a modest 6-20 record last year, but Camello enjoyed being around her teammates and pushing herself on the court. She was able to live with relatives in Pleasanton during the school year to trim her commute considerably.

"Last season was just really fun. I know we had a lot of losses and all that, and there was a lot of taking over trying to get the team to win, but last season was really fun and enjoyable," she said. "My teammates were awesome, and there wasn't a lot of pressure. I could just go out there and do my thing and enjoy it. That's how I scored a lot of points, I guess, just being able to be free and enjoying the game."

With a strong midrange game, Camello spends extra time working on her

outside shooting. She shot 30% from 3-point range last season and 74% from the free throw line. Morgan believes her outside shooting will continue to improve as the injured leg strengthens. Henever loses sight of the big picture with his players.

"We always want to win more games, but changing the lives of these young ladies has been a blessing for me," he said. "Basketball ... one day that ball's going to stop bouncing, and I want to help them move forward."

Camello seems absolutely ready to do just that with her trademark dedication and drive.

"We asked her to do a lot, and she never, ever complained — only apologized, because she wanted to do more," Morgan said.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
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MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

down upon all to wash clean and water the land. Tender blades of grass show their heads in the rich earth and the velvety hills go from gold to green. The gentle giants of the wind, the windmills, guard the valley with their natural energy and beauty in the Altamont.

All fits in a harmony, a natural harmony, a silent lullaby that we can enjoy especially in our bewildering times; a settling we all need.

The solar panels do not belong in this valley to uproot this gentle valley we all love and care about.

Report the News Independently

Bill Bau, Livermore

Dear Independent - please report the news independently.

How about let's stop reporting just the part of the news you agree with? The article titled "Relief Funds Would Help Local Theaters" only stated that President Trump threatened to veto the bill, but there was nothing about the fact he was asking congress to increase the amount of money sent out to the American people. It also left out that he was making a comparison to the gross amounts of money sent offshore and spent on "studies." In essence, during this time of extreme need, spend money with a more thoughtful focus.

Downtown to Thrive Once Again

Peggy Schimmelman, Livermore

With the imminent implementation of the Coronavirus vaccine, Livermore's downtown will soon be thriving again. Our shops and restaurants will flourish as residents and visitors alike embrace the return to "normal." Our new hotel will eventually bring more

tourists eager to enjoy the unique character of our city. Wouldn't it be nice if our visitors, along with the rest of us, could be treated to an expansive, attractive city park area that complements the unique personality of our downtown in a way that two multi-level affordable housing units directly across from each other will not?

While low-income housing is rightfully a priority, it would be great if we could avoid building these three- and four-story units on either side of one of our busiest downtown corridors. It's my understanding that Eden Housing is willing to relocate their development to another area nearby, which would also allow for more housing units with larger floor plans and parking.

Moving the Eden Housing development would allow for a spacious, beautiful, city park that would appeal to both residents and visitors. I urge our city council and residents not to give up on the idea.

It Doesn't All Make Sense

Angela Joe, Livermore

While many decisions made regarding preventing the spread of Covid-19 (wearing a mask, social distancing) are good and well thought out, others do not make sense and do not prevent the spread of Covid.

Downtown in Livermore, and elsewhere, restaurants previously open for outdoor dining with six-foot distancing are now closed or open for take-out only. Malls were closed, and parks like Shadow Cliffs was open for walk-in only, which minimized people and prevented crowds.

Today, the day after Christmas, as I'm driving home from Pleasanton to Livermore, I noticed the

parking lots around the San Francisco Outlets were full. I drove through to see what was going on, and everywhere there were lines of people either purchasing or returning product. I also drove by Shadow Cliff Park, which is open to the public, and there were a lot of people.

Whatever happened to the stay home order? Since when is shopping for clothes or going to a park essential? Big business like those at the mall and the park are less likely to struggle during these hard times compared to independent restaurants.

As long as there are inconsistencies like this, the Covid-19 cases will not drop.

Larger Park Needed

Donna Cabanne, Livermore

The defining feature of our downtown?

Most residents would like a larger central park that would define the heart of our city as a place to gather and socialize and support our

retail businesses.

The Eden housing plan has increased the building sizes by 42%; and the park has been reduced by

(See MAILBOX, page 8)

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TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Now Until Sunday, Jan. 3 The Wave Closed

The Wave will be closed for the holidays beginning Monday, Dec. 21. Lap swimming and water walking hours will resume on Jan. 4. Swim camps will resume on Jan. 9. Reservations for lap swimming and water walking lanes during the week of Jan. 4 will open on Wednesday, Dec. 30, at noon.

Now Through Thursday, Feb. 11 Lions Club Seafood Fundraiser

Livermore Lions Club is now taking orders for its annual seafood fundraiser. This year's event will feature cioppino, a delicious Italian stew, brimming with shellfish, tomatoes, wine, spices and herbs. Each 64-ounce container of cioppino serves four and comes with a casse croute bread round. The cost is \$65 per order. Deadline to place orders is Thursday, Feb. 11. Take out service will be Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 16 and 17, from 9 to 11:30 a.m., at The Singing Wine Maker, 5143 Tesla Ave., in Livermore. To order, contact Ben at ben_barrientos1121@att.net or call 805-405-8743.

Now Until Saturday, March 6 Give the Gift of Swim

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

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

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

ONGOING WEEKLY EVENTS

Livermore Downtown Farmers Market Open for the Season

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

Pleasanton Farmers Market Open for the Season

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

Six Feet Apart Productions Shares Art From a Distance

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

Stress Relief Recovery International

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

VIRTUAL ONLINE EVENTS -AVAILABLE ANYTIME

Register for Virtual and Outdoor Activities

Do you want to learn a new skill, dabble in a new art form, get into shape, or finally take up that new hobby you've pushed back for so long? The Pleasanton Library and Recreation Department is now offering a wide variety of virtual and outdoor in-person courses this fall. Registration is open for everything from coding, web design and engineering courses to art, public speaking, and outdoor group exercise. There are even courses on LEGO and Minecraft. Sign up now at https://bit.ly/33BNAoU.

EBRPD Brings "Parks to People"

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

LARPD Now on YouTube

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

Music Together Tri-Valley Supports Early Childhood Development

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

Pacific Chamber Orchestra Offers Musical Podcast

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

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

A Year in Review: Taking a Look at the Moments of 2020

(Photos - Doug Jorgensen)



An African American Cultural Celebration was hosted by the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center in the Bankhead lobby and plaza on Saturday, Jan. 11.

On March 16, staff offer meals to those driving through Marilyn Avenue Elementary School in Livermore. As a result of school COVID-19 closures, school districts began offering free drive-thru meals. Each child was able to receive a breakfast and lunch.



Young scientists in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District shared their research and innovation at the Junction Avenue K-8 School during the 20th Annual Science Odyssey Feb. 13 "Trashion" show. The show featured an eco-friendly fashion contest.



A large sign cropped up on April 13 in Livermore in front of Stanford Health ValleyCare, thanking health care workers for their service during the COVID-19 crisis.



Parents and administrators from the Pleasanton Unified School District placed ribbons up and down Main Street on May 20 to celebrate the graduating Class of 2020.



On June 5, protesters paused at the intersection of Valley Avenue and Hopyard Road in Pleasanton for 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence – the amount of time that a Minneapolis police officer knelt on George Floyd's neck.

On Tuesday, July 28, Christine Beitsch-Bahmani with CityServe conducted a free mask giveaway and food distribution at Inklings on Main Street in Pleasanton.



On the heels of an August lightning storm paired with triple-digit temperatures, officials reported that four different fires had burned about 1,800 acres in the Calaveras and Sunol areas by Aug. 17. Tri-Valley residents were advised to prepare for rolling power outages. Crews from Alameda County Fire, Livermore-Pleasanton Fire and Cal Fire were among the response effort. These fires would become the SCU Lightning Complex fire, covering a total of 396,624 acres and ranking as the state's third largest fire.

Rail fans were thrilled when the Niles Canyon Railway reopened for a brief stint in September. Trains ran between Sunol and Niles on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 12 and 13. Officials reported tickets sold out for both days.



In October, Livermore's Witches Night Out had a fantastic line-up of restaurants and retail shops participating with COVID-19 modifications. Dinner and drinks featured themed menus, specialty cocktails and surprises for the witchy participants, who also received moonlight shopping deals throughout the evening. Even with all the changes, a few things were still the same — creative hats, great food, exceptional beverages and spellbinding good times with friends.



Joshua Taburaza of Dublin cast his ballot for the General Election at the Fallon Middle School polling place, on Nov. 3. The gymnasium was used for in-person voting and ballot drop off.



The bubble tents at Brava Garden Eatery in Pleasanton housed outdoor diners Dec. 5 just before Alameda County entered a more restrictive shutdown.





A group of friends from the East Bay play flag football on Sunday, Dec. 27, at the Bernal Community Park sports field in Pleasanton. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Suspects Arrested in Theft of Lottery Tickets

The Pleasanton Police Department said Wednesday that two men arrested in Ripon, California, are believed to be responsible for an early morning break-in at a convenience store in Pleasanton and the theft of several rolls of lottery tickets.

Joseph Salcido, 46, and Hector Amparo, 47, were being held on unrelated charges in the San Joaquin County Jail in French Camp.

In a news release, Pleasanton police said the two suspects broke a window to gain entrance to the Hacienda Shell at 3790 Hopyard Road about 5 a.m., Wednesday, and stole "numerous rolls" of lottery tickets.

A few hours later, Pleasanton police said they received a call letting them know that Ripon police had arrested three suspects on other charges and found rolls of lottery tickets that traced back to the Pleasanton store. Pleasanton police said further investigation convinced them that the suspects "were directly related to the Pleasanton burglary as well as crimes committed in other jurisdictions."

The third suspect was not identified.

Pleasanton police referred all questions to the Ripon Police Department, which declined to comment on the case.



Joseph Salcido

Local Squadron Promotes Tracy Sophomore

Arsh Muhib, a sophomore at Merrill F. West High School in Tracy, has been promoted to cadet second lieutenant with the Tri-Valley Composite Squadron 156 after receiving the Gen. Billy Mitchell Award from the Civil Air Patrol.

Muhib, who joined the Civil Air Patrol in 2017,

is now Bravo Flight Commander for Squadron 156.

Muhib is enrolled in the Space and Engineering Academy at West High School and is project manager for the school's Tau Robotics Team.

He was a first-place finisher at the 2019 San Joaquin County Science

and Engineering Fair and received an award from the International Society for Optics and Photonics at the California State Science Fair. He also earned the Raytheon Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Recognition Award at the California State Science Fair in 2017.

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

32%. The smaller park is enclosed by buildings and will be used as space for private apartments - not space the public will use.

Furthermore, one parking stall for every Eden Housing unit is less than city standards and insufficient. It will create a constant traffic jam, as those in Eden Housing units will scramble to find additional spots for their vehicles.

Solution?

Move the housing off the downtown center to create a central park and amenities that will support the hotel, retail, restaurants, and cultural activities, and benefit the community as a place where we all want to go - not a place we avoid because the parking is inadequate, and housing dominates and overshadows our downtown.

A central park with amenities for all is the only downtown we should support.

Management Terms Could Have Ripple Effects

Jeff Colvin, Livermore

Management at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), emboldened by Proposition 22's passage, has doubled down on their long-term goal of subcontracting the skilled crafts work at LLNL, putting the safety of the entire workforce and surrounding communities at risk.

Approximately 250 skilled crafts workers are responsible for maintaining and upgrading the entire facility infrastructure at LLNL. They are graduates of multi-year apprenticeship programs and are skilled and experienced journeymen. Moreover, they are trained to recognize and mitigate the unique hazards of the LLNL work environment, including the legacy contaminants of nuclear-weapons-related work reaching back over 60 years. The lab truly cannot function without them.

These workers are represented by University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTe). They have been without a contract since Dec. 31, 2019, with very little progress in over a year of bargaining. This is mainly because of management's strategy of breaking the union by driving down wages.

LLNL's skilled trades workers do not have pensions (unlike their counterparts working for local municipalities, for example), and their wages are on average about 10% behind the local market.

Wages are a big issue, but the main issue is the union's right to bargain.

The whole collective bargaining environment has shifted radically under the Trump administration, arguably the most anti-labor administration in U.S. history. The long-standing rule under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act put

the onus on management to show that the union waived its right to bargain changes to pay, benefits, or working conditions.

Under a new ruling by Trump's National Labor Relations Board, MV Transportation, it is now the other way around. The onus is now on the union to show it has not waived its right to bargain. Bargaining at LLNL remains stuck on management's refusal to even discuss the union's compromise proposals to protect its bargaining rights.

Protecting bargaining rights might seem like a small matter, but it is not.

When last August's wildfires forced evacuations, LLNL management granted authorized leave for all affected employees except for skilled crafts employees, claiming it had to bargain with the union first. Management kept denying the authorized leave in bargaining, only granting it after the union filed a grievance.

If management succeeds in forcing its terms on the union, they will likely move fast to further erode these workers' protections, risking a huge uptick in safety incidents, which could potentially have ripple effects well beyond the LLNL site.

Time Is Short

Johnna Thompson, Livermore

Remember the win-win, which promised that we could have a central park downtown by moving the workforce and low-income housing to alternate sites north of Railroad Avenue?

The win-win is still a possibility, but only if the Livermore City Council hears from Livermore residents that that is what we want. Alternative sites are available and can accommodate even more than the 130 units designated in the city's current downtown plan.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to provide much-needed, affordable housing, while also creating an oasis of open space in the center of town? However, if we do not speak up soon, the city will be continuing on its current path of approving 130 units of housing on the central downtown site in buildings, which are 42% larger than those shown on the drawings of the city's plan last Spring. The three- and four-story apartment buildings will have an underground parking garage for its residents, with one stall per apartment, and only one entrance and exit, which is on L Street.

In combination with the 220 units already under construction on the other side of L Street, this sounds like a recipe for downtown congestion, a place to avoid, not an invitation to linger, as would be the case if there were a park on the site instead.

The window of opportunity to change the outcome is short; the city council will be voting within weeks to final-

ize the plans for downtown. We have only one chance to create the downtown we will want to spend time in.

Let the council know what kind of downtown you would like. Do it now. Time is short.

What's Not To Like?

Michael Ferrucci, Livermore

I've said it many times to the city council, as well as letters to the paper, "What's not to like about a larger downtown central park?"

I fear the latest iteration of the Eden housing project for 130 dwellings in downtown Livermore is a major mistake. A mistake that will create a negative result that will last for decades. There is no doubt that this bastardization of our downtown landscape with three- and four-story, tacky buildings will certainly disappoint voters like myself with a sincere desire for a larger downtown central park.

Three- and four-story buildings in our downtown will undoubtedly make our town look more and more like Walnut Creek and other municipalities I've seen and loath in Southern California, or worse yet, Dublin!

I am not against housing mixed with retail. I grew up and went to college in San Francisco, where I lived in a flat above a hardware store. Retail development and housing is essential. However, we are not San Francisco or Orange County!

We are Livermore, and I believe we have a special responsibility and obligation to maintain the elements that give us that reputation of caring about our environment and our desire to protect our community from greedy development. I suggest that housing be considered North of Railroad Avenue, where there is more than adequate and available land potential for much more needed affordable housing.

To quote one of my mentors, "Why foul our nest?"

I have always supported a larger central park and urge our council to do the same.

Shift The Energy

Rich Buckley, Livermore

The trait of success running through American enterprise is under-promise and over-deliver.

We all respect that sort of integrity.

The disappointing downtown rental housing plans produced by Eden Housing under-delivers to produce an unacceptable, oversized, cloistered, rental project, consuming precious open space downtown community park land. This dog don't hunt.

Please look at lands on the north side of Railroad Avenue for alternative development that will protect our precious open space in our downtown. Shift the energy to bring vigor for the preservation of our downtown community center and park open space.

Downtown Housing

Richard Ryon, Livermore

According to the Dec. 16 edition of The Independent, the housing proposed for the downtown redevelopment area has increased by approximately 42%.

The park space between the buildings has been reduced by about 32%. The previously approved housing

is thought by many to be too much for this precious, centrally located property. Now this!

A dilemma divides the public over the need for two desirable things: affordable work-force housing and a public park. It seems that a win-win solution that would fulfill both needs has been discussed over the last several months. That is, move the housing to north of Railroad Avenue, where there is potentially space for even more housing, and thereby allow the Veterans Memorial Park to expand into more space between Livermore Avenue and L Street.

Matt Graves, Eden Hous-

ing project developer, explained that there is too small a footprint for "all the things that you would want in an apartment building," such as "corridors, elevator shafts, stairs, laundry facilities, offices" in the approved 2018 plan for 130 units. After all the years of discussion and planning that went into the city-approved development, the new proposal appears to be a bait-and-switch scheme. Such a gambit should be summarily rejected in the presently approved location.

On the other hand, the new proposal is a further strong argument to move housing to the north of Railroad Avenue.



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LIC#0M28209

INVESTIGATION

(Continued from first page)

cated the victims suffering from medical issues in the library.

As the officers entered

Control and Prevention's website describes fentanyl as 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Nor-

Schmidt called Covington's death a "complete tragedy."

"Our hearts go out to the family," he said.

The woman's condition was not released, but Schmidt said she was expected to recover.

In a memo to school staff, Dublin Unified School District Interim Superintendent Daniel Moirao described the victims as "part of our site custodial team."

"Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of our lost colleague and also to the students, staff and community of Fallon Middle School," Moirao wrote. "No matter how strong the Fallon Mustang family is, losing a family member at any time is tragic, but during this time of year, it is devastating."

The district made counselors available for students and staff.

Saying "speculation helps no one," Moirao asked staff to wait for facts to come from the police and authorities about the deaths.

"I know that this has been a tough year for our community," he said. "If we have learned anything in 2020, it is to appreciate what we have and to remember to tell our family and friends that we love them."

"No matter how strong the Fallon Mustang family is, losing a family member at any time is tragic, but during this time of year, it is devastating."

the room and carried the victims out, they reported detecting a chemical smell.

Alameda County paramedics arrived to treat the pair. The woman was taken to a hospital, but Covington was pronounced dead at the scene.

Alameda County Fire hazardous materials specialists examined the library and campus, but did not find any dangerous chemicals, Schmidt said.

What caused that smell was not clear, and it was undetermined what the officers had detected, Schmidt said. Officers found fentanyl at the scene, but he declined to say where.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid pain reliever used for treating severe pain, usually in advanced cancer patients.

The Centers for Disease

mally prescribed in skin patches or lozenges, it also can be misused and abused.

In recent years, a rise in overdoses and deaths in the United States are tied to illegally manufactured opioids, including fentanyl. Users like its heroin effect, often mixing it with heroin and cocaine for a feeling of euphoria, the CDC said.

In 2018, more than 31,000 people died in the United States from overdoses involving synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, but excluding methadone.

Preliminary tests showed the drug found at the scene was fentanyl, Schmidt said. Alameda County Coroner's Bureau officials scheduled Covington's autopsy for this week. Toxicological tests for narcotics often can take weeks to perform.

OBITUARIES

Toby J. Silva

Dec. 19, 1976 – Dec. 2, 2020



Toby J. Silva, age 43, was born in Livermore on Dec. 19, 1976, and passed away peacefully on Dec. 2, 2020, at 12:20 p.m., with family by his side.

Toby was raised by his father, Darrell Silva. He graduated from Del Valle High School in Livermore. Toby spent much of his spare time enjoying camping, playing Bingo, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. Toby especially loved spending time with his two pit bulls, Buddy and Roscoe.

Toby left a profound impact on the world – he was everyone's friend and had a special way of making you feel loved, valued and important. He worked as the IT director at Legacy Real Estate in Fremont and built a reputable career in the technology industry helping and training thousands of real estate agents over two decades. He is most known

for his infectious smile and distinct laughter. Just being next to Toby sparked immense joy in everyone.

Toby leaves behind his father, Darrell Silva, and step-mother, Pat Silva, of Escalon; mother, Peggy Hall of Pioneer; sister, Angela Gallagher of Stockton; nephew, Michael; nieces, Elissa and Chloe; Aunt Terry Butler of Livermore; Aunt Paula Bohannon of Sheridan, Wyoming; Uncle Ron Silva of Lathrop; Great Uncle Donald Kelly of Livermore; and many close cousins. Toby also leaves behind many devoted friends and loved

ones from over 20 years in the real estate industry. Toby was preceded in death by his grandparents, Lloyd and Mary Corvello; Uncle Michael Butler; and his pit bulls, Buddy and Roscoe.

Toby is remembered as a son, brother, nephew, uncle, partner, best friend, teammate, mentor, role model, technology guru, and devoted Dad to his beloved pit bulls, Buddy and Roscoe.

Toby's true and trusted friend at Legacy Real Estate, Judi Nield, honored Toby with a Celebration of Life on Dec. 10, 2020. The response from his family and his Legacy Real Estate family was overwhelming. Someone said, "Toby was an instant friend," ... so very true. He was an instant friend to all who met him. Toby was also known as a hero, a lifesaver, a guardian angel.

Your presence will be missed forever, Toby.

Rita Lucille Aichlmayr

Rita Lucille Aichlmayr (nee Hoeschen), age 82, passed away on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

She was the loving mother of Hans Thomas Aichlmayr, Mary Ann Aichlmayr (deceased) and Lisa Diane Hockensmith (Joseph Bucha); former spouse of Ronald Lawrence Aichlmayr; and sister-in-law of JoAnne Bucklin (Ed) (both deceased), Patricia Perkins (Morris, deceased) and Gary Aichlmayr (Betsy Price).

She was also the dear friend of Frederick "Art" Strong (deceased).

Family received friends in The Vodrazka Funeral Home of Independence, 6505 Brecksville Road (Route 21, south of Roctside), on Sunday, Dec. 7. Mass of Christian Burial was on Monday, Dec. 28, at St. Michael Catholic Church, Independence. Interment followed at Christ The King Catholic Cemetery, in Brownville, Minnesota.

Tressie N. Kirkman

Sept. 14, 1919 – Oct. 29, 2020



Tressie was born in Nemo, Missouri.

The family moved to Morgan Hill when Tressie and her two older sisters were young to farm. The family then settled in Brentwood to farm and ranch.

Tressie graduated from Liberty High School in 1937. She then continued her education at San Jose State University, graduating in 1941 with a degree in home-making. Tressie was hired as a home economics teacher at Livermore High School in July of 1941. She taught at LHS until her retirement in 1977.

Tressie married Elbert A. Kirkman Jr. in 1944, and they were married for 55 years. They both loved to travel and went on many trips together. They toured South America, the Caribbean, Alaska, the Greek Isles and the Mediterranean Sea. They visited all parts of

Europe, including Russia, Scandinavia, France, Spain and Italy. They made many longtime friends traveling to China, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand.

Tressie was active in many organizations. She was a past president and member since 1947 in the PEO Sisterhood. She was the founding [resident of the Del Valle Home Economics Association and a past president of the Mulberry Chapter of the Children's Hospital Oakland.

She was also very involved at her church, serving as a deacon and had recently been on two pastor-nominating committees. Tressie was also a home economics judge at many county fairs, including Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara and Stanislaus.

Tressie is preceded in death by her parents, Albert and Iva Ricards; her husband, Elbert A. Kirkman Jr.; sisters, Twila Winger and Jessie Puccetti; and granddaughter, Lindsay Kirkman. She is survived by her son, Kenneth Kirkman; granddaughter, Keely Kirkman; great-granddaughter, Kinsey Kirkman-Brim; and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth St., Livermore, California, 94550. A memorial service will be held at a later time when it is safe to gather in person again.

OUR LOCAL NONPROFITS NEED YOUR SUPPORT, PLEASE DONATE IF YOU ARE ABLE!

Amador Questers

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www.CalQuest.org
www.questers1944.org

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(925) 290-7592
Amador.valley.lions@gmail.com

Assistance League Amador Valley

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925-461-6401
Assistanceleague.org/Amador-valley/

Axis Community Health

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925-201-6068
Axishealth.org

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Cheza Nami

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chezanami.org

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cyttrivalley.org

CityServe of Tri-Valley

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925-223-6947
cityservetrivalley.org

Community Health Education Fund

CHEF/TVNF
C/O Maria Mancini
P.O. Box is 420
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Culinary Angels

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CulinaryAngels.org

Drivers For Survivors

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510-369-5770
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Exceptional Needs Network

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925-344-9090
Fertilegroundworks.org

Friends of the Livermore Library

P.O. Box 2483
Livermore, CA 94551
www.friendsoflivermorelibrary.org

Friends of Open Space and Vineyards

P.O. Box 1191
Livermore, CA 94551
fov.org

Goodness Village

1660 Freisman Rd
Livermore, CA 94551
Goodnessvillage.community

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925-417-8733
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Hope Hospice

6377 Clark Ave.
Dublin, CA 94568
925-829-8770
HopeHospice.com/donate

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678 Enos Way
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saintbartsLivermore.com

Livermore-Amador Symphony Guild

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925-447-6454
Livermoreamadorsymphony.org/guild

Livermore Area Recreation and Park District Foundation

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925-373-5730
larpd.org/larpd-foundation

Livermore Art Association

P.O. Box 216
Livermore, CA 94551
925-449-9927
Livermoreartassociation.org

Livermore Filipino-American Organization, Inc.

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Livermorefilam.org

Livermore Heritage Guild

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925-449-9927
lhg.org

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HomelessRefugeLivermore.com

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Museumonmain.org

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OpenHeartKitchen.org

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Paws-In-Need.org

Pleasanton Art League

P.O. Box 23
Pleasanton, CA 94566
Pal-art.com

Pleasanton Community Concert Band

P.O. Box 135
Pleasanton, CA 94566
info@pleasantonband.org
PleasantonBand.org

Reins In Motion

Therapeutic Riding Program
P.O. Box 1001
Livermore, CA 94551
reinsinmotionca.com

Rotarian Foundation of Livermore

P.O. Box 2181
Livermore, CA 94551-2181
http://www.rotarianfoundationlivermore.org

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925-931-5378
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LivermoreShakes.org

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ShepherdsGate.org

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SpectrumCS.org

Sunflower Hill

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SunFlowerhill.org

The Taylor Family Foundation

P.O. Box 2450
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925-455-5118
TTFF.org

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue

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TVAR.org

Tri-Valley Conservancy

1457 First St
Livermore, CA 94550
925-449-8706
trivalleyconservancy.org

Tri-Valley Haven

3663 Pacific Ave.
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925-449-5842
TriValleyHaven.org

Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance

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TVNPA.org

Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre

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Valley Dance Theatre

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A group of Chinese immigrants protest the policies of the Chinese Communist Party at a staged demonstration by the San Francisco Premium Outlets in Livermore, on the corner of El Charro Road and West Las Positas Road, on Saturday, Dec. 26. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

STORAGE

(Continued from first page)

impact on wildlife, pollution, traffic, flashing lights and invasion of privacy, as the building heights would

the gabled rooftops would at least offer an aesthetic appeal in conformance with the neighboring homes.

need of housing in Pleasanton. In addition, one of those workers would reside on-site, further decreasing

Councilmember Julie Testa reiterated her stance on the importance of supporting affordable housing within

“With the approval of the design and conditional use permit, the applicant will demolish seven existing storage buildings and an office located at 3716 Stanley Blvd. to construct a 900 square-foot office, a 9,750 square-foot one-story storage building and a 197,410 square-foot three-story storage building.”

overlook backyards.

“Based on residents’ concerns of the blocked views, I don’t see a benefit to the pitched roofs,” Narum said, noting she would prefer a flat-top design. “It’s an industrial area, and we’re trying to make something into mixed use when it’s industrial.”

Testa stated that she would have preferred the buildings to be lower in height altogether, but at this point in the process,

Elen Clark, director of community development, further stated that a study found the traffic impact on the site would be minimal, given the use of rental facilities. Those who utilize storage facilities are typically not visiting units on a regular basis.

On affordable housing, the project presented a unique circumstance — it would increase commercial development, but only add three to five employees in

the demand on affordable housing that Public Storage would place on the city through employment generation. The Affordable Housing Fee required for the project was estimated at \$2.2 million. Staff recommended cutting it to \$68,973, but provided a range of fee options.

The council agreed to a fee of \$137,000, as motioned by Councilmember Valerie Arkin, who noted \$68,973 was too low. While

the city, she voted “yes” after her original motion to accept staff’s option 2 for \$516,878 was declined. Mayor Karla Brown indicated half a million was too much to charge a company that would only provide up to five employees to the city. She agreed to the amount proposed by Arkin. Narum voted “no,” preferring staff’s recommendation and expressing concerns about discouraging investment in the community.

CRASH

(Continued from first page)

Shej on a referral from Ian. She had worked with him just five or six days during his stint and called him a “very sweet kid.”

Kumar described Ian and Shej as such close friends they could be considered brothers. And although Shej was technically a cousin, he was also like a brother. Kumar said his family and the Ericksens grew up together.

“(Shej) was just a fun kid,” Kumar said. “He loved playing video games. He loved hanging out with Ian. He was just a down to earth kid.”

Ian, known for frequently changing his hairstyle and color, loved to hang out with Shej, order “DoorDash,” play Fortnite and watch Netflix.

“He was just a really caring kid,” Kumar said. “He meant the world to us, just as much as Rahul and Shej.

Brar, who was finishing up some credits at Las Positas College, was finding success in stock trading. When he wasn’t riding his skateboard, he was researching companies and asking his father to invest. Brar kept binders with his research, planned all his moves, wanted to buy real estates and live on his own in Los Angeles. Kumar said his brother “would have rocked it.”

“He bought all the financial books, like ‘Rich Dad, Poor Dad,’” Kumar said. “He



The community of Livermore paid tribute to three young men who were killed in a car crash on their way home from work last week. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

was a young entrepreneur in the making.”

Coming to grips with their losses, each family was making funeral plans and accepting support from the community.

A GoFundMe page (http://bit.ly/Indy_GoFundMe) seeking donations for funeral expenses had nearly raised its \$30,000 goal through Tuesday.

Donors offered condolences on the site as they gave, some of them knowing the young men, while others offering support as Livermore residents.

“All of us in Livermore

send our love and support to the families of the three boys,” Jacqueline Pence wrote. “Rest in peace, Rahul, Shej and Ian.”

Jesús Flores sent his sympathies to the families, saying, “I know God is taking care of these three young beautiful souls.”

Dawn Matthews said simply, “I am so sorry for this loss to our community.”

Kumar said the “lovely messages” and financial support were “unbelievably overwhelming.”

“It just means so much to all of us,” he said. “People I haven’t connected with in years have reached out.... These people really care. The Livermore community is really strong. I’m eternally grateful for all the support.”

Police, meanwhile, are conducting interviews and completing their reports. The investigation will include examining the contents of the car’s “black box,” Goard said.

Black boxes can contain information including about the engine and braking that can help investigators determine speed and whether the

driver tried to stop.

The truck driver’s name was not released. Whether the driver committed a prosecutable crime was not immediately known. Goard stated that “a final determination on criminal charging and fault has not been determined yet.”

Kumar said his family is not angry and demanding charges, even though the driver had allegedly blocked the road with an illegal turn. He described what happened as “just a tragic accident” and said his family has no hate for the driver.

“We are in disbelief,” Kumar said. “This is a tough time for everybody. We were really sad and in denial at first but are coming to terms with it. We have no anger in our hearts.”

School is on winter break. In a statement following the crash, Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District Superintendent Kelly Bowers said a crisis team was being mobilized to provide grief and trauma counseling to students, faculty and support staff.

Tri-Valley SOCKS Distributes \$62,000

Tri-Valley SOCKS, which was forced to cancel its annual Bras for the Cause walk this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, still managed to raise more than \$62,000 for breast cancer care and research.

The Pleasanton nonprofit reported this week that it donated \$27,500 to the Helen Diller Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of California, San Francisco.

It also gave \$15,500 to the Stanford Health Care ValleyCare Charitable Foundation for its breast cancer educational programs and support services; \$12,000 to AXIS Commu-

nity Health for case management and imaging services for low-income and uninsured women; and \$7,000 for the HERS Breast Cancer Foundation in Fremont to provide uninsured and underinsured women with bras, prostheses, and wigs.

Since its founding in 2014, Tri-Valley Socks (Stepping Out for Cancer Kures) has raised more than \$2 million for organizations involved in the fight against breast cancer. The annual Bras for the Cause walk in Pleasanton, and the post-event celebration and awards ceremony, is usually the group’s primary fundraiser.

GUN

(Continued from first page)

a time of record gun sales, motivated by people wanting to protect themselves and their families in the wake of the pandemic and fears of social unrest.

In total, the Giffords Law Center estimates 17.4 million guns were sold nationwide between March and November 2020 — 81% more than the number of estimated guns sold over the same period last year, based on statistics from the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Existing state law requires gun owners to lock or safely store their firearms when they know children will be present, or if their household includes a person with a criminal record who is prohibited from owning a gun. The Dublin ordinance essentially extends this law to require the safe storage of guns to all households, City Manager Linda Smith said.

Firearms purchased in California also must be accompanied with an approved firearms safety device, such as a trigger lock, or proof that the purchaser owns a gun safe or trigger lock that will work with the gun. Smith noted that the law does not require its use outside situations with chil-

for individuals who choose to keep guns in the home, the firearms should be kept unloaded and locked in a separate location from ammunition.

“We know that children who can have easy access to guns, who are going through mental health crises, are at a much higher risk of suicide than children who are at homes with properly stored firearms,” Josey said. “We also know that we are in the middle of a pandemic that is disproportionately hitting the mental health of our youth.”

The Dublin ordinance cited several studies that show the unsafe storage of guns is a public health and safety threat. Safe storage best practices include locking guns in a secure place such as a gun safe or cabinet or using safety devices such as trigger or cable locks, and these are supported by a variety of organizations. According to a study published in the Journal of Public Health in 2018, an estimated 46% of gun owners reported safely storing all of their guns.

The ordinance also gives examples of affordable lockboxes and biometric safes that allow an owner to

“We know that children who can have easy access to guns, who are going through mental health crises, are at a much higher risk of suicide than children who are at homes with properly stored firearms.”

dren or people with criminal convictions present.

City Councilwoman Jean Josey called the ordinance a common sense preventative measure that does not unreasonably burden the rights of lawful gun owners.

Research from JAMA Pediatrics found that the safe storage of firearms can reduce firearm suicide and unintentional firearm fatalities among youth. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that

quickly and easily retrieve a weapon in the dark in seconds.

Mayor Melissa Hernandez, who asked for consideration of a free gun lock program, recalled losing a friend in the eighth grade to a tragic gun accident.

“It’s not about taking gun rights away from people at all, whatsoever,” she said. “It’s about educating. It’s about making sure that we’re doing our part by having awareness out there.”

REPARATIONS

(Continued from first page)

for inviting him to help with the goals of looking into reparations. He noted that racial discrimination has a long history in California. The first governor in 1849 helped create a law designed to keep freed slaves out of the state.

Haubert Has Social Justice Plan

In Alameda County’s First District, Supervisor-elect David Haubert — who represents his hometown of Dublin, Livermore and part of Fremont — will spend his first day on the job on Jan. 4.

During the campaign, Haubert issued a Social Justice Action Plan. His points include a focus on hiring with more diversity in mind. The federal government set goals and timetables to promote diversity within its government contractors and federal departments, said Haubert. The state and county should set goals and meet them, using its Affirmative Action Plan.

Better training by using consultants who have experience in the field of bias-free hiring are also important, said Haubert. A

new position, Chief Equity Officer, needs to be created to help monitor progress. Haubert also favors calling in the state Attorney General’s office to start a formal review of situations where an officer used force that resulted in death or harm.

Haubert supports banning chokeholds and other modifications of police rules that would de-escalate use of force situations. He also would ban shooting at moving vehicles.

Idea Behind Public Health Link

The discussion around the link between racism and public health didn’t start in 2020, but it’s gained traction following national events that again placed a spotlight on police brutality and racial inequities.

Contra Costa supervisors took the action at their Nov. 10 meeting to establish a special office of “racial equality and social justice” to treat the problem. They are not the first to draw the link between institutional racism and public health. Milwaukee County in Wisconsin did the same in 2019.



Shej Kumar and Rahul Brar

EDEN

(Continued from first page)

“These changes are unacceptable, and are a serious deviation from the plan proposed and advertised repeatedly by the City of Livermore ... Our mission is to reverse these changes and recommend a superior alternative that calls for a park rather than affordable housing in our city center, while providing more affordable housing nearby.”

The group notes that because Eden Housing will present its revised plan for approval to the Livermore Planning Commission in January and to the City Council in February, there is only a short time to make the community “aware of the harm that it will cause.”

Changes to Eden Housing’s Plan

Save Downtown Livermore reported working with a private architect, who determined by analyzing the design plans that the housing footprint is roughly 42% larger, reducing the park size.

“The park between the 4-story building (79 units) on the north side and the 3-story buildings (51 units) on the south side has been reduced by an estimated 32%,” the group wrote. “The buildings run from the edge of L Street on the west to the extension of K Street on the east. The narrower space between the massive structures would be seen as

servicing the private apartment renters rather than the public.”

Save Downtown Livermore said that they were concerned about the hard surfaced open space, substandard parking, and the “loss of workforce housing.”

“All of the units in the current Eden Housing plan involve low income, very low income and homeless housing, not the workforce housing that was promised,” the release continued.

A U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) report states that, “workforce housing is most commonly intended for households with incomes between 80 and 120% of Area Median Income (AMI).” According to the Alameda County Eden Housing A1 report and an Eden Housing staff member, none of the occupants of the Eden Housing units will be eligible if they fall into the 80% to 120% category. Only homeless up to 20% AMI, very low income up to 50% AMI and low income up to 60% AMI will qualify.

The Group’s Proposed Alternative

Save Downtown Livermore states that after extensive research, they have found that options for retaining Eden Housing’s \$14.4 million loan, meeting

tight deadlines and procuring revenue to purchase land north of Railroad Avenue are encouraging. As a result, they state, an increase in affordable housing and a community park would be possible.

In January, 2020, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors authorized a \$14.4 million loan to Eden Housing to fund the planned 130 unit project on the Lucky site.

When asked whether Eden Housing could keep its loan if the project moves across the street, an Alameda County staff member emailed on Jan. 29, 2020, “If the result of changes were higher scores on ranking criteria and a larger number of affordable units, it is likely that the funds could remain with the project ...”

Save Downtown Livermore said they have learned that all but one of the six parcels needed for the new project area are “either for sale, have been involved in informal sale discussions, have no buildings on them, or are owned by the city.” They noted that this is good news, since a relatively fast acquisition of them is important.

According to Save Downtown Livermore, 194 units could be placed on the six parcels at a density of 62.4 units to the acre, less than the 63 units to the acre

standard provided them by a city representative. The underground parking provided would meet the city’s 1 unit to 1.1 parking stall requirement.

“Adding an appraiser’s preliminary land costs to demolition and tenant relocation expense estimates from others provides a total cost of \$8.6 million,” the release stated. “If Eden Housing relocated 130 units north of Railroad Avenue as part of a 194 unit project, it could be responsible for 67% of the cost of the land and related costs, or \$5.8 million. A city staff member has said that the current uncommitted Livermore Affordable Housing Fees Fund totals \$6 to \$7 million.”

Turning to Another Government Agency

“For a number of years, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) has openly expressed interest in providing affordable teacher and staff housing in Livermore to retain its strong workforce,” the release continued. “It has discussed a number of available options. One involves acquiring land for teacher housing with funds secured from the disposal of LVJUSD property that is no longer needed.

“If this option were followed, the door could be

open to participation in the Eden Housing project. For instance, proceeds from the disposal of the surplus land could pay for 33% of the land and related costs of the new site, providing space for 64 units. School district representatives have said that they are interested in pursuing the opportunity; a public LVJUSD discussion could be held in the near future.”

Save Downtown Livermore adds that LVJUSD’s funding of at least 64 teacher and staff housing units would fulfill any remaining Jan. 29, 2009 CalHFA Residential Development Loan Program (RDLP) requirement associated with the Lucky site.

“That was the understanding of those meeting in 2018 with one who had access to city data,” the group stated. “However, past and current research conducted by several attorneys engaged by community groups shows that even 64 units may not be needed to comply with the RDLP requirement.”

Relocation of Eden Housing Units

According to the Notice of Affordability Restriction recorded in January 2009 in connection with the CalHFA RDLP loan, “Owner may propose a change of use only in the event that the Property is

no longer needed for the purpose specified in this Notice & Declaration and the Property will be used to benefit individuals or families whose incomes do not exceed 120 percent of median income for the area.”

Save Downtown Livermore states that because Eden Housing will develop more units on a larger area, the Lucky site would no longer be needed for housing.

“The tenants of the affordable housing across the street would benefit from a unique park, which they could use for their recreation,” the release continued.

Save Downtown Livermore concludes, “The community must ask Eden Housing to study seriously the alternative option, and leave behind the plan that would damage the character of our downtown. The site north of Railroad Avenue would provide a greater number of affordable units, much-needed teacher housing and a creative park — a triple win that would draw our community together.”

Matt Graves, Eden Housing project developer, was unable to return requests for comment by press time.

Members of the organization can be reached at SaveDowntownLivermore@gmail.com.

LEGAL NOTICES/CLASSIFIEDS

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LEGAL NOTICES

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

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Senait M. Abraha 1250 Lakeland Dr. Livermore, CA 94551 (408) 786-4336, filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Senait Mesfin Abraha Proposed Name: Senait Mesfin Piccigallo

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

NOTICE OF HEARING Date: 1/22/2021 Time: 11:00 AM Dept: 17

The address of the court is: Alameda County Administration Building 1221 Oak Street Oakland, CA 94612

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

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574355

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

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574355 The following person(s) doing business as: Elenita's Coffee, 7054 Dublin Meadows ST. APT C, Dublin CA 94568. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Enrique Rojas, Founder/ CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2020. Expires December 3, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4804 Published December 17, 24, 31, January 7, 2020.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574784

The following person(s) doing business as: Nguyen Solutions, 3029 Leger CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ricky Nguyen, 3029 Leger CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 01/01/2020. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ricky Nguyen, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 24, 2020. Expires November 24, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4805 Published December 17, 24, 31, January 7, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 575211

The following person(s) doing business as: Little Sugar Sapes, 360 Quartz Circle, Livermore, CA 94550, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Shelley O'Brien and Andrew Miller, 360 Quartz Circle, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Married Couple. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Shelley O'Brien, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 14, 2020. Expires December 14, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4806 Published December 24, 31, January 7, 14, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 574877

The following person(s) doing business as: Hodge Podge, 1941 Chestnut St., Oakland, CA 94607, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jeri Lynn Snyder, 1941 Chestnut St., Oakland CA 94607. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/1/20. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jeri Lynn Snyder, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 1, 2020. Expires December 1, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4807 Published December 24, 31, January 7, 14, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 575384

The following person(s) doing business as: Art's Heating & Cooling, 1048 Serpentine Lane, Suite 314, Pleasanton, CA 94566, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): David A. Ghahramany, 4500 The Woods Dr. Apt#2233, San Jose, CA 95136. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/29/19. Signature of Registrant/s/: David A. Ghahramany, Owner. This

statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 18, 2020. Expires December 18, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4808 Published December 31, January 7, 14, 21, 2020.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 575027

The following person(s) doing business as: ASA Communications, 1515 Third Street, Livermore, CA 94550, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Stacey Kenison, 1515 Third Street, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/5/20. Signature of Registrant/s/: Stacey Kenison, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 4, 2020. Expires December 4, 2025. The Independent Legal No. 4809 Published December 31, January 7, 14, 21, 2020.

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Our current weekly adoption events include:

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

Saturdays & Sundays - Kittens at Dublin PetSmart, 6960 Amador Plaza Rd. Hours: 11am to 3pm.

Visit our website, WWW.TVAR.ORG, to see adoptable animals, volunteer opportunities, and how to donate.

Follow TRI-VALLEY ANIMAL RESCUE on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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

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accounting clos proces, inclng preprng cmplx journal entris, analyzng accountng balncs & recncing balnc sheets; Prep & rvnw consolidated financil rpirts; Plan, mng & stremln intrnl contrl proces; & Prfrm profitbilty & cost of goods analysis & prep mnthly rpirts. Job Site: Pleasanton, CA. Resumes - HR, 415 Boulder Ct, #100, Pleasanton, CA 94566. See: www.akshaya-inc.com

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SURGE

(Continued from first page)

in effect until those regions once again have intensive care unit (ICU) capacity of at least 15%. The order went into effect for these regions on Dec. 6 and were to remain in effect for three weeks. Both regions are currently reporting 0% ICU capacity prompting the extension of the order.

Diminishing ICU capacity in the Bay Area region, which includes Alameda County, triggered implementation of a regional shelter-in-place order on Dec. 17. It is set to expire Jan. 8. However, as ICU capacity has not yet recovered in the region, it is likely that the order will be extended into the foreseeable future.

In Alameda County, the number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 continues to climb. The county reported 418 hospitalizations on Dec. 27, the highest number reported to date, and a 38% increase over the last two weeks. The number of COVID-19 patients in county hospitals is now more than eight times

Alameda County Public Health Department. "We are experiencing a huge influx of cases, and we need everyone to do their part in stopping the surge by staying home as much as possible, avoiding gatherings of any size and wearing masks if going out for essential activities."

While Bay Area hospitals are reporting ICU capacity of 9.5% in aggregate, ICU capacity in Alameda County is much less dire. As of Dec. 27, the county reported that 34.2% of its ICU beds are available. Balram noted that the county's capacity could be used to provide aid to nearby counties, should patient demand exceed their capacity.

"Alameda County has more hospital beds than many other counties in our region and responsibility to provide mutual aid for our neighboring counties when they reach capacity," Balram said. "Thus the 34% is a measure of hope for our region and not a true reflection of beds available in Alameda County."

"We likely will experience in two weeks — 10, 14 or 18 days from now — this surge stacked on top of these other surges related to holiday activities."

higher than it was in mid-October, when the latest surge started.

The number of patients in an ICU hit a low point of 11 patients on Oct. 23. Currently, there are 115 ICU patients in the county, more than 10 times the mid-October low point. That number is likely to rise as admission to the ICU tends to lag hospital admissions by 10 to 14 days for COVID-19 patients.

"This surge makes our summer case rates minimal by comparison," said Neetu Balram, public information manager with the Alam-

Newsom also announced Monday that California has opted in to the federal COVID-19 Pharmacy Partnership. Under this partnership, CVS and Walgreens will administer the Pfizer vaccine to residents and staff in long-term care facilities. Those pharmacies will start with nursing homes, which will take an estimated three to four weeks; and then vaccinate staff and residents in assisted living, residential care and other long-term care facilities. Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and nurses will administer the vaccines. Pharmacy techni-



One of Santa's stops on Christmas Eve was at the intersection of Heather Lane and Iris Way, in Livermore. Families drove by and greeted Santa, who was played by Michael Gomez, and elves Cathy Gomez, Kaylyn Gomez and Lauryn Gomez. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

cians are participating under a recent waiver by the Board of Pharmacy that requires appropriate supervision under California law and specialized training.

"Vaccinating those most vulnerable among us is critical to fighting this virus," Newsom said. "By leveraging CVS and Walgreens resources, we can effectively deploy vaccines to residents and staff at our long-term care facilities, which are at higher risk of Covid transmission – and do it at no cost to the state or local government."

The state expects to receive approximately 1.8 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the month, including those doses already received. The next phase of the state's vaccination plan, Phase 1B, will include two tiers. According to Newsom, the first tier will include residents over 75, and workers in education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture. The second tier is

expected to include persons over 65 with underlying medical conditions, workers in transportation and logistics, those incarcerated, unhoused individuals and those involved in critical manufacturing.

The Community Vaccine Advisory Committee was expected to meet Wednesday, Dec. 30, to discuss the distribution of vaccines for Phase 1C. The results of that meeting were not available as of press time.

With an increasing number of vaccine doses flowing into the state, Newsom indicated that the state will have little tolerance for medical personnel that deviate from the prescribed distribution plan.

"I just want to make this crystal clear," Newsom said. "If you skip the line or you intend to skip the line, you will be sanctioned. You will lose your license. You will not only lose your license, we will be very aggressive in terms of highlighting the reputational impact as well."

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