



The Livermore Downtown Tree Sweater Forest offers local fiber artists an opportunity to design and create sweaters to adorn trees on First Street from September through November each year. Georgette Thomason, right, poses with her husband, Mark, next to her contribution. The artists, who do not receive any funding toward the cost of materials necessary to create the tree sweaters, focus on different things, including stitch work, color work, scenery, funny characters and children’s literature. (Photo courtesy of the Thomasons)

Cash-Strapped Pleasanton School Board Unanimous in Seeking Significant Loans

District Agrees To Borrow as Much as \$15M from County through April

By Ruth Roberts

PLEASANTON — The Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) board has unanimously agreed to borrow as much as \$15 million from the Alameda County Treasurer to ensure meeting the district’s cash-flow needs for October and November.

Based on the district’s General Fund beginning balance for 2025-26 and revenue disbursements (state, federal and other sources), the district’s month-to-month cash flow will be in the red starting this month and continuing through November.

In December, the district will receive its local property taxes, which are part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) calculation and will restore the district’s fund balance to a positive state, according to the staff report.

To navigate the short-term cash-flow shortage, the district also plans to internally borrow about \$11 million from other funds, which are to be determined. The short-term loan of up to \$15 million from Alameda County would cover the remaining shortfall.

The funds borrowed from the

county will need to be repaid once the LCFF revenues are received in April. The treasurer will charge interest based on the school district’s potential earnings, with current rates between 3% and 3.5%.

Ahmad Sheikholeslami, assistant superintendent of business services, said that PUSD has previously been able to rely on funding reserves, but due to recent budget challenges, the district is unable to meet its financial obligations.

“This (short term borrowing) does occur for many school districts; we are not rare,” Sheikholeslami said

(See LOANS, page 7)

Business Closures Discussed in Pleasanton

Downtown Association and the City Take Steps To Deal With Series of Losses

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — A recent slew of business closures has prompted the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA), in partnership with the city, to step up its business-assistance efforts, including new programs to help fill downtown vacancies.

PDA Executive Director Gabrielle Welk, who stepped into the role in March, said the PDA has created a downtown-vitality committee that will start meetings in October to discuss overall vitality and beautification efforts for the area.

“The PDA does recognize that vacancies are something that’s super important in general, but in these times when businesses in Pleasanton have been closing, we’ve come up with some strategies,” Welk said.

The association will also work with property owners to wrap vacant windows with decorative artwork to

improve downtown aesthetics, and to help advertise the available properties, including a new online platform to share statistics, pictures and videos of the downtown’s vibrancy.

In support of the PDA, the city council unanimously declared on Sept. 16 its intention to increase business-improvement-district fees, which fund the PDA. The fees have not changed since 1996, nor have they accounted for inflation over the past three decades.

With the improvement fees set as a multiple of a business’s license fees, street-level businesses on Main Street would see their business-improvement multiplier increase from a factor of 2 to a factor of 3. A street-level business grossing between \$100,000 and \$249,999 per year, for example, would see its annual business-improvement fee increase from \$150 to \$225 under the new schedule. Upstairs Main Street businesses would

see an increase from a factor of 1.5 to 2, while those on side streets would see their factors go up from 1 to 1.5.

Over the past 10 years, the PDA has received an average of \$81,000 per year from improvement fees, which the city has matched with contributions from its general fund.

The city plans to introduce an ordinance for the new fee schedule on Oct. 7, followed by a public hearing and possible formal adoption on Nov. 4.

Business owners at the meeting welcomed the increased fees, viewing their relationships with the PDA as a mutually beneficial partnership.

“As a small business in Pleasanton, this is the type of investment for me that I feel like I can’t afford not to make,” said Jesse Eiland, co-owner of Primrose Bakery. “It’s going to be commensurate with the times that we live in; it’s not going to be antiquated in 1996. It’s not for the city; it’s

(See FUNDING, page 7)

Pleasanton Wrestles With Development And Boundary Issues

Expansion of Business Projects Could Mean Changes to City Limits, Urban Growth Boundary

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The city is again attempting to craft a plan to guide development on its east side, considering how new visions and policies might change city boundaries, the urban growth boundary (UGB), land uses, open space, public services and infrastructure there.

Current city boundaries stop short of the Chain of Lakes, the area’s quarry-pits-turned-lakes, while the East Pleasanton study area and the city’s sphere of influence extend almost to Discovery Drive in Livermore, south of the Livermore Municipal Airport. City staff have already begun work to annex parcels for two development projects, and further expansion may involve changes to Pleasanton’s city limits

and urban growth boundary.

Efforts to prepare an East Pleasanton Specific Plan dating to 2012 resulted in a draft plan and an environmental-impact report in 2014, but work on the plan paused in 2015. The city resumed work in 2019 but again stopped short of plan adoption in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We are a city with ‘planned progress’ in our motto, so let’s just learn from that and move forward,” Mayor Jack Balch said at a joint city council and planning commission meeting last week. “Let’s get the city in the driver’s seat to (do) the best we can for future opportunities at the site.”

Several upcoming development projects in the East Pleasanton area, along with the specter of

(See UGB, page 6)



Shown is the exterior of an accessory dwelling unit built by AKD Homes. (Photo courtesy of AKD Homes)

Nonprofit Offers Free ADU Help For Tri-Valley Residents

Local Cities, Alameda County ‘Very Responsive’

By Jessica Zimmer

TRI-VALLEY — Tri-Valley residents can get free assistance in learning about Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) construction, permitting, and experienced designers and contractors by contacting Hello Housing, an Oakland nonprofit that assists homeowners throughout Alameda County.

One of the facts they will learn is that residential lots within the city limits of Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton tend to be large and uniform, which allows for flexibility in ADU design.

Contractors can advise on which modifications are available, such as the incorporation of prefabricated bathroom pods.

“I build ADUs throughout the

East Bay, and north from Sonoma County down to Santa Cruz. I’ve seen the Tri-Valley get inspectors out for projects quickly and process permits easily. Local cities and Alameda County have been very responsive,” said Kalan Camero, general manager of AKD Homes in Hayward.

The No. 1 reason Tri-Valley residents want ADUs is a desire for separate space for family members.

“Elderly parents build ADUs for themselves and gift the primary residence to their adult children,” Camero said. “Some families build ADUs as a guest house for members of their extended family. We also see parents of teenagers build ADUs as places for teens to relax.”

The most requested differences for ADUs are ones that make them

(See ADU, page 7)



Areej Masoud, founder and director of the Khayari Organization, a Palestinian women’s empowerment association, spoke Sept. 18 on the theme of “Practicing Hope” at Cornerstone Fellowship in Livermore. (Photo courtesy of Areej Mousad)

Khayari Organization Mentors With Hope

Association Supports Leadership and Empowerment of Palestinian Women

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE — Early in life, Areej Masoud began her career in advocacy for the Palestinian cause.

Born in Bethlehem in the West Bank as a Palestinian Christian, Masoud’s entire life has been spent under Israeli occupation. In 2014, at age 23, she crossed paths with Reverend Michael Yoshii as part of a youth cohort of speakers representing the Kairos Palestine Document, issued in 2010 by Palestinian Christians to alert the world to the situation in Palestine.

Yoshii, a retired pastor who served

for 30 years at Buena Vista United Methodist Church in Alameda, has dedicated his ministry to solidarity with marginalized communities. He co-chaired Friends of Wadi Foquin in 2009 to support Palestinian villagers in the Bethlehem District impacted by occupation through projects restoring land, livelihood and dignity.

Cornerstone Fellowship in Livermore invited Yoshii to host a Sept. 18 interview with Masoud, now 33. Pastor Christiaan VandenHeuvel opened the evening’s conversation designed, he said, “to sit with people that live a different life and have a

different starting point.”

Yoshii had recognized in those early days Masoud’s budding leadership skills and public-speaking abilities, and helped facilitate opportunities for her to visit the U.S. on speaking tours that included her attendance at the General Conference for the United Methodist Church in 2016.

“Michael Yoshii did a lot and had a huge (impact) on me. Maybe I should tell him that,” Masoud said. “He played a huge role in what I’m doing now.”

She credits Yoshii, along with a few others, including a university

(See HOPE, page 7)

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PET OF THE WEEK



DAHLIA

Fall flowers are lovely, but none can compare with delightful Dahlia. She has the elegance of a dahlia in full bloom, the charm of a sunflower stretching into a bright blue autumn sky, and a playful spirit that blossoms once she feels at home. Cozy, curious and cute as can be, she’s the pick of the flower farm. Don’t leave her behind — come fall in love with Dahlia today. Call Valley Humane at (925) 426-8656 or email info@valleyhumane.org to get started with the adoption process. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

Pleasanton Dry-Cleaning Contamination Cleanup Begins

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The Water Quality Control Board has issued a cleanup order to the owners of the former American Cleaners dry cleaner at 555 Main Street in response to contamination found at the site.

The board sent the order to the current owner, Charles H. Stoll of the Stoll Main Street Trust, as well as two past property owners and several former dry-cleaner businesses dating back to 1943.

Investigations between 2017 and 2024 detected tetrachloroethene (PCE), a toxic solvent commonly used in dry cleaning between 1940 and 2000, in the soil, groundwater, soil gas and indoor air. Samples of groundwater in the area’s upper aquifer, down to

about 80 feet, revealed concentrations up to 25,600 micrograms per liter, compared to the 5 microgram-per-liter maximum contaminant level set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

A deeper groundwater well at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, about 2,000 feet northwest of the site, tested at 24 micrograms per liter. The fairgrounds use the well for drinking water, sanitation and irrigation. Interim remedial measures there include granular-activated-carbon treatment since 2001, although further measures are necessary at the well, according to the cleanup order.

“This order sets cleanup levels and requires implementation of a cleanup plan to protect and restore groundwater in the Livermore Valley

groundwater basin,” Water Board Executive Officer Eileen M. White said at a board meeting last month.

According to the EPA, the effects of long-term PCE exposure include impaired cognitive and motor-neurobehavioral performance, as well as damage to the kidney, liver, immune and hematologic systems, and on development and reproduction.

The plume has not affected the Zone 7 Water Agency, which manages and wholesales water to the Tri-Valley, including the City of Pleasanton, Zone 7 General Manager Valerie Pryor said.

“There is no indication that the former American Cleaners poses a threat to Zone 7 municipal wells,” Pryor said. “The nearest Zone 7 municipal well is approxi-

mately 1.5 miles northwest of the site and, according to the Zone 7 Annual Groundwater Monitoring report, the general direction of groundwater flow in this contamination area is to the west.”

Zone 7 has assisted the Water Board in its investigation by providing local groundwater data and hydrogeological information relevant to the case, advising on monitoring needs and tracking progress, Pryor continued.

The responsible parties have submitted a cleanup plan that includes injection of in-place water treatment into the aquifer at 49 points, expansion of an existing soil-vapor extraction system and the installation of water treatment at the fairgrounds drinking water-well. The owners will also install monitoring for the

groundwater, soil vapor and indoor air. Cleanup cost estimates total \$4.5 million to date.

The plan’s first status report is due Jan. 30.

New PFAS Mitigation Fund Awaits Governor’s Approval

In other groundwater news, the state legislature earlier this month unanimously approved a bill that would create a fund accessible to local agencies for the cleanup of PFAS, or forever-chemical, contamination in groundwater.

Introduced by Tri-Valley Senator Jerry McNerney in February, Senate Bill 454 would establish the PFAS Mit-

igation Fund and authorize the State Water Resources Control Board to seek out money for the fund. The board would then, at its discretion, issue grants, loans or contracts to water suppliers and sewer-system providers for the purpose of treating PFAS-contaminated drinking water.

A recent report from the Natural Resources Defense Council estimated some 25 million California residents, about 63% of the population, rely on water sources contaminated with PFAS.

The bill was presented to Gov. Gavin Newsom last week and awaits his approval.

Limitless Axes & Ales Venue Shuttters After Nearly Five Years in Pleasanton Location

By Sanestina Hunter

PLEASANTON — Limitless Axes & Ales has closed its Pleasanton location at 1808 Santa Rita Road after nearly five years. Its Brentwood and Stockton axe-throwing venues will remain open.

our Pleasanton axe-throwing location has officially closed with the conclusion of our lease,” the company posted on its website. “Pleasanton was our very first Limitless Axes & Ales and will always be special to us — the community welcomed us with open arms

The closure comes amid a recent wave of local business departures in Pleasanton. PRIMM Boutique closed in August, Main Street Brewery closed on Sept. 21, and Starbucks announced in July it would not renew its lease.

The Pleasanton Limitless

itless Escape Games in Livermore in 2016 after a business trip inspired them to open their own escape room, according to the company’s website. Their interest in social and competitive entertainment eventually led them to axe throwing.

During a family trip to New York in 2020, they tried axe throwing for the first time. That experience planted the idea to bring the concept home. Later that year, they opened Limitless Axes & Ales in Pleasanton, a location that quickly became popular for combining axe throwing with a lively social atmosphere and interactive social gaming experiences.

The U.S. axe-throwing market is currently worth \$163 million, with about 360 businesses nationwide, according to industry data. Industry revenue grew at a reported annual rate of 1.9% to \$203.3 million over the five years to 2021.



The Limitless Axes & Ales location in the Valley Plaza Shopping Center on Santa Rita Road in Pleasanton has closed its doors after a five-year run. (Photo — Sanestina Hunter)

Owned by Michael and Brook Hill, the business operated in the Valley Plaza Shopping Center. The Hills will continue running Limitless Escape Games next door. It remains open with puzzle-solving and interactive challenges.

“After an incredible run,

and gave us a phenomenal experience.”

The statement added that the owners are focusing on their Stockton and new Brentwood locations, where they can offer full bar service, live music, larger event spaces and a more complete entertainment experience.

venue featured seven lanes, seating areas, a bar serving beer and wine, a lobby and restrooms. Each lane was fenced for safety. The Planning Commission approved the permit, and the City Council gave final approval in 2019.

The Hills launched Lim-

Livermore Settles 2023 Lawsuit Claim Over Use of Utility Fees

The Alameda County Taxpayers’ Association (ACTA) said last week that it had reached a settlement with Livermore over what it claimed was the city’s illegal diversion of water and sewer utility fees to the general fund.

“This is a victory for every Livermore resident who has been overcharged on their utility bills,” said ACTA President Marcus Crawley. “For years, the city treated water and sewer bills as a slush fund to prop up the general fund, in violation of Proposition 218. That practice ends today.”

ACTA and co-plaintiff Alan Heckman filed a lawsuit in 2023 alleging that Livermore unlawfully inflated water, sewer and stormwater charges to generate excess

revenues that were then diverted to general government operations.

Proposition 218, also known as the Right to Vote on Taxes Act, was a constitutional amendment passed by California voters in 1996. Among its key provisions was a prohibition on local governments assessing fees that exceeded the cost of providing a service.

“This case reaffirms that taxpayer protections in the California Constitution have real teeth,” said attorney Vincent Slavens, who represented the ACTA. “Cities cannot disguise hidden taxes as utility fees. Ratepayers have a constitutional right to pay only the true cost of service.”

Under the settlement, Liv-

ermore agreed to refund \$3.78 million through reductions in future water and sewer rates, with \$1.56 million allocated to water and \$2.22 million to sewer customers, according to the ACTA.

Livermore also agreed to end Right-of-Way and Use of City Property fees, which the lawsuit alleged the city had been diverting from utility funds to pay for unrelated general government expenses.

The city will also pay more than \$270,000 in attorney’s fees incurred by the ACTA.

Although the city did not admit any liability, the ACTA said the settlement provides residents with direct financial relief and provides protections against any future misuse of utility revenues.

SideTrack Bar Celebrates Oktoberfest

The SideTrack Bar + Grill in Pleasanton will host an Oktoberfest celebration featuring German food, games and live entertainment from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 17, and 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 18.

The Oktoberfest menu will include “Za German Plate,” with sausages, German potato salad, red cabbage and sauerkraut. The “Za German Works” will include beer in commemorative SideTrack stein.

An ala carte menu will include pretzels and hotdogs or mac and cheese with tater tots for the kids.

Several local breweries will be selling wine and beer, including traditional German beers

The Primrose Bakery in Pleasanton will also be at the SideTrack Bar, 30 West Angela St., selling German cookies and cakes, and local breweries will be selling a variety of wine and beer, including several traditional German brews.

Live entertainment will be provided by Polkageist West from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday and AlpenBand California from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday.

The event is free with food and drink tickets available for purchase at the door. Pre-event packages to ensure seating and a limited-edition beer stein are available for purchase online at sidetrackeats.com.

After 7 p.m., patrons must be 21 or older.

Dublin Eyes Planning Commission Member

Dublin is seeking to fill a vacancy on the city’s Planning Commission.

The commission, including five regular members and two alternates, advises

the city council on planning, zoning and land-use matters.

The term for the vacancy to be filled expires December 2024.

Dublin residents inter-

ested in the position should contact the city clerk’s office at 925-833-6650 or apply online at tinyurl.com/4ua7rzs.

The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 26.

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Marylin Avenue STEAM Academy Unveils New Facilities

By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — The Marylin Avenue STEAM Academy on Sept. 17 held a community open house, with the public invited to view its newly completed facilities and campus improvements.

Livermore Mayor John Marchand, Vice Mayor Evan Branning and Council Member Kristie Wang attended the ribbon cutting for the new STEAM building, as did Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) Superintendent Torie Gibson, School Board member Christiaan VandenHeuvel and Board clerk Steven Drouin.

“This project is a perfect example of how we were able to extend the impact of local investment by acquiring state money to improve our schools for our students and community,” Gibson said.

The open house celebrated campus improvements totaling \$25 million, including new and renovated classrooms, STEAM labs, a research center and library in support of Marylin’s flourishing STEAM magnet program.

The STEAM program provides students with the opportunity to learn and master their elementary curriculum with a special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. In particular, it strives to foster essential STEAM skills in the areas of inquiry, questioning, problem-solving, creativity and collaboration, which can then be applied to solve real-world problems.

Additionally, a new parking lot and drop-off area, futsal courts and TK playground were constructed, while fields were renovated, as well.

The improvements and renovations were made possible through Measure J, a \$245 million facilities bond approved by Livermore residents in 2016 to repair and upgrade the district’s aging school facilities.

Since then, the bond has been used to modernize classrooms, repair aging infrastructure, renovate facilities, improve school visibility, increase access for individuals with disabilities, upgrade hardcourts and improve overall safety and security.

“A big thank you to the Livermore community for voting for the Measure J Bond that funded this project

projects at other LVJUSD schools, including East Avenue Middle School, Joe Michell K-8, Granada High



A man and woman watch a young girl investigate some of the myriad options available for students at the Marylin Avenue STEAM Academy open house Sept. 17 in Livermore. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

and garnered matching state and federal funding,” Wang said. “And thank you to the best Bond Management Team around.”

Funds provided through Measure J have also gone toward supporting renovation

School and Livermore High School.

Many of those projects, such as the construction of a two-story classroom building and courtyard at East Avenue, have already been completed. For a full

list of Measure J projects, including their project status as of April, visit: <https://www.livermoreschools.org/departments/bond-program/measure-j-projects>.

Construction upgrades to Marylin Avenue began comparatively later, in the spring of this year, and were completed on schedule this fall.

The upgrades were made to coincide with the development of the school’s new STEAM program, which has experienced significant growth since 2022, when LVJUSD was awarded a \$10 million Federal Magnet Grant to bring the program to Marylin Elementary School. That led to the school subsequently being renamed the “Marylin Avenue STEAM Academy.”

“These investments are going to strengthen our STEAM magnet program while also making our campus safer and bolstering the sense of pride our students and staff have in the school they learn and work in every day,” Principal Joe Meunier said.

With the completion of the Marylin project, the dis-

trict has finished its final major facilities improvements supported by state funding tied to Measure J, according to the LVJUSD website. Going forward, accessing additional state funds and continuing districtwide facility improvements will require the pursuit of a new bond with support from the community.

To learn more about the Marylin STEAM Academy project and see more photos of the school’s updated classrooms and STEAM labs, visit: <https://www.livermoreschools.org/departments/bond-program/measure-j-projects/marilyn-avenue-steam-academy-renovation-project>.

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Fish Passage Project in the Sunol Valley Moves Toward Finish Line by End of Year

Restoring Trout, Salmon Access to More Than 20 Miles of Habitat is Effort’s Objective

By Vivien Wenneker

SUNOL — Major construction on the Sunol Valley Fish Passage Project, an effort intended to restore fish passage and ecological function in the upper Alameda Creek, is expected to be completed this year.

The project involves the removal of an existing Sunol Valley concrete erosion-control mat, which is protecting a 36-inch pipeline, L303, owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

The plan is to replace L303 with a new pipeline buried about 18 feet below the existing Alameda Creek grade to eliminate any need for an erosion-control structure in the creek bed that limits fish migration and ecological function.

The new pipeline will be located approximately 114 feet north of the existing one to allow for an open trench with shallow side slopes to account for soil stability during the construction excavation.

Through this effort, the Sunol Valley Fish Passage Project is expected to restore fish access to more than 20 miles of habitat, giving fish access to quality spawning grounds in the upper watershed.

“PG&E is pleased to be part of this historic effort to restore steelhead trout and Chinook salmon to Sunol Valley,” said Tamar Sarkissian, spokesperson for the utility company. “Being good stewards of the environment is one of our priorities as a company, making this a natural fit for PG&E.”

Since 2023, PG&E and California Trout (CalTrout), a San Francisco-based conservation nonprofit, have been working together to design, permit and construct the project. PG&E’s construction began earlier this year and was completed in early September, while CalTrout is still working on its scope and expects to be finished later this year.

The project was conceived by PG&E more than 10 years ago, according to Claire Buchanan, CalTrout’s project manager for the Sunol Valley Fish Passage Project.

“In 2023, CalTrout was asked to join the project team and take on a lead role in the barrier-removal project in Sunol Valley to open more than 20 miles of stream in the upper watershed to Chinook salmon and steelhead, remediating the last unnatural barrier on mainstem Alameda Creek,” Buchanan said.

Removal of this final major barrier in the mainstem Alameda Creek was driven by decades of work by the Alameda Creek Alliance and the Alameda Creek Fisheries Restoration Workgroup to complete 16 other fish-passage projects. The group of agencies, nonprofits, and community groups formed in 1999.

As the project lead, CalTrout has worked to reduce the project cost for PG&E by applying for grants and taking on a major coordination role among the project’s many partners. It has also applied for and holds all permits for the project.

CalTrout has partnered closely with NOAA Fisheries, a key federal funder of the

project, Buchanan said. CalTrout has also partnered with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), the landowner of the project site. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, meanwhile, have supported the project through permitting.

Alameda Creek is the largest Alameda County tributary to San Francisco Bay and has historically produced large numbers of Chinook salmon, lamprey and steelhead in the South Bay. Central California Coast steelhead trout in the Alameda Creek watershed are listed as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Over the past century, the watershed experienced intense urbanization, including the construction of three major dams and reservoirs, according to Buchanan. Until recently, the entire Alameda Creek watershed was inaccessible to anadromous fish (besides Pacific lamprey, which were able to sucker their way over some barriers).

As California’s cycle of drought and deluge continues, resolving this last barrier to fish passage will help ensure fish passage upstream regardless of species, life stage or size, and whether it is a wet or dry year.

Alameda Creek currently serves as one of the largest vehicles for drinking water in the Bay Area, transporting water to millions of residents, according to the SFPUC. With so many demands on its resources, consistent dedication and collaboration between water agencies, and

state and local conservation organizations over the past few decades have been crucial in working to restore native fish populations and ecological function.

“The upcoming fish-passage project on Alameda Creek can build an even greater appreciation for Bay Area fish,” Buchanan said. “These fish have traveled all the way from the ocean and ended up in your backyard! It’s remarkable to think about it, let alone to watch it happen.”

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On Thursday, September 18, 2025, the Livermore Valley Chamber of Commerce welcomed Abbey Carpet & Floor as the newest member with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and to celebrate their 50 years in business! Abbey Carpet & Floor is family owned & operated. Their family is committed to making your home beautiful while providing knowledgeable, friendly service in a comfortable atmosphere. Discover one of the largest floor covering showrooms in the Livermore area!

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EDITORIAL

When Everyone Stand Ups to Pressure, We All Win

Last week came the disturbing news that after TV host Jimmy Kimmel criticized MAGA’s and President Trump’s reaction to the shooting of Charlie Kirk, ABC was pressured into suspending Kimmel’s show indefinitely. After a fierce outcry from media and citizens across the country, ABC reversed its decision.

There’s a lesson in this: Standing up to a President who breaks the law works.

The other takeaway is that it should be obvious to everyone that Trump is attempting to overturn the constitutional order and replace it with autocracy. The message coming from Washington, D.C., is loud and clear: No one is allowed to criticize Trump.

According to the Associated Press, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr warned that the network and its local affiliates could face repercussions if Kimmel weren’t punished.

This is a direct violation of the First Amendment, which specifically says that government cannot abridge free speech or freedom of the press.

When Paramount, which owns

CBS, canceled “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” in July, the network claimed costs were the reason. But the truth is that Colbert has long been one of Trump’s most vociferous critics. Just days before the cancellation, he’d criticized Paramount for seeking approval for its merger with Skydance, and for settling a lawsuit from Trump.

The quick reversal by Disney, which owns ABC, shows us where the administration’s rush into authoritarianism is weakest. When the administration breaks the law, the pushback has to be immediate, hard and widespread.

This may seem like a problem for big media in New York and Los Angeles. But it’s an issue for local media like The Independent, too. Local media are dependent on advertisers, subscribers and donors for their survival. Their ability to tell the truth and hold power to account depends on having robust First Amendment protections.

If ABC can be forced to silence a critic of the administration, no

one will be safe from government censorship.

This threat translates to institutions other than news media. Trump has targeted Ivy League schools, holding federal research grants hostage at Columbia, Brown and the University of Pennsylvania until they made changes to policies and courses in line with his political agenda and paid a “fine.” So far, schools have paid Trump nearly \$500 million in blatant shakedowns. Harvard is still negotiating with the administration to free \$2.6 billion in research funding.

Last week, UC Berkeley notified 160 faculty and students that their names have been shared with ICE for alleged incidents of “antisemitism,” a term that has become a cudgel in the hands of the administration to punish any speech in support of Gaza or against Israel’s onslaught in the territory, which the United Nations recently labeled a genocide.

The blowback against the school has been quick, with Politico reporting that more than 600 academics signed onto a letter to UC President

James Milliken and UC Berkeley Chancellor Richard Lyons criticizing the university’s actions.

Again, this looks like a game for big players. Las Positas College is a great school — it was recently ranked the No. 2 community college in California and No. 4 in the nation — but it is small compared to the Ivy Leagues, or the UC campus just over the hills.

Regrettably, what big schools do can affect small schools. If big schools can be bullied into changing their curriculums to match the dictatorial and often ahistorical politics coming out of this administration, then little schools that fight back may not have the broad support needed.

The lesson here is clear: this is not a far-away fight between large institutions that will never touch the Tri-Valley. The impact can affect residents here. That means this fight is everyone’s. Fortunately, we are now seeing how to win it. We must battle for free speech whenever and wherever it is threatened. It is our Constitutional right, and our responsibility to protect it.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:

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

Boar's Head Listeria Outbreak Plant Reopening Lucas Nelson, Livermore

The Boar’s Head deli meat plant in Virginia, linked to the Listeria outbreak that killed 10 people last year, is already talking about reopening. While Congress debates whether the plant is “ready,” they are missing the bigger question: why are we reopening deadly meat plants at all?

Animal products are inherently dangerous—for animals who suffer and die, for workers who face unsafe conditions, and for consumers who risk exposure to lethal bacteria. Instead of propping up a system that causes both cruelty and contamination, we should be investing in plant-based agriculture.

Plant-based foods are safer, healthier, and kinder. Reopening this plant may restore business as usual, but business as usual is exactly what puts lives at risk. Congress should take this moment to push for a food system that protects people and animals alike. Outbreaks like

this remind us that eating animals isn’t just dangerous—it’s unnecessary.

A Solution William Ballard, Livermore

I’ve got the solution to school gun murders: call them assassinations. Then lawmakers will care.

Trump is Following the Law David Marco, Livermore

Charlie Kirk did not foment violence. When his conversations are examined in their entirety, it’s clear that while he stood strongly for his positions, he was never threatening, and encouraged people to share their opinions. He did not belittle or threaten, but treated people with respect. That’s the essence of freedom of speech. The huge responses at his memorial show that this is the sentiment of most Americans. And the memorials themselves are a stark contrast to the violence and terror when leftist groups are offended.

In contrast, Democrat poli-

ticians have continuously accused Trump of being a Hitler and a fascist. Meanwhile, they themselves have acted like fascists by encouraging violence to shut down freedom of speech. Democrats increased their shrill cries for physically attacking conservatives since Trump was re-elected. He was elected by a landslide. Therefore, these people are attacking the democratic process in our country.

Charges that he’s a dictator or fascist are not at all true. He defeated the Mueller investigation and then defeated impeachment charges using the democratic process. Spurious charges during the 2024 campaign were defeated in courts of law. Trump’s current actions have been supported by courts of law. He was opposed by a minority of lower level judges who have been shown to be deeply biased and/or have serious financial or personal conflicts of interest, and they have gone way outside their jurisdictions.

How can we trust media that produces over 90% negative news on Trump, while the nation voted and polls continue to show he has over 50% popularity? Trump is right that we need to reinstate the Smith-Mundt Act that prevents the government from using propaganda on the American people. CNN, MSNBC, CBS, Politico, AP, and other news outlets that just happen to report about his 90% anti-Trump news seem to have received large sums of money from NGO’s. This money was well hidden until DOGE discovered it. Was that funding a coincidence?

I’m thankful for the mailbox letter last week showing DC residents supporting Trump’s actions. I’m sure people in other cities filled with violence feel the same. Investigations of the protestors in DC a few weeks ago show that most came from out of state, mostly from Democrat strongholds. There is also evidence of paid protestors.

Freedom of speech is recovering in America.

Charlie Kirk's Assassination: A Call to Gun Control Maya Gokhale, Livermore

The recent tragic killing of a young man points to the urgent need for gun control laws in America. If the shoot-

er had not had ready access to long range precision assault weapons, he would not have been able to take this life. It’s time to go beyond thoughts, prayers, state ceremonies, and flags at half-mast and take meaningful action.

With the unified executive, legislative, and judicial system presently controlling this country, timely action to restrict assault weapons can be accomplished in short order. I urge this administration, through executive action and legislation, to institute a ban on bullets for these weapons, to issue a recall of assault weapons from the general public, and to put in place legislation prohibiting their sale.

If this legislation had been enacted after the brutal slaying of Melissa Hortman, her husband and their family pet on June 14, 2025, a loss of three times the magnitude as the most recent murder, Charlie Kirk might be alive today.

Welcome to Trump World: Trump, The Crybaby Rosario Milelli, Pleasanton

Donald Trump is once again telling us exactly how he would dismantle American democracy — and too many are still pretending not to hear it. Last week, Trump declared that network broadcast licenses “should be taken away” because “97% of the stories are bad about a person.” His conclusion: “That’s no longer free speech. That’s just cheating.” He even went so far as to call critical television coverage of him “illegal”. His gripe is that “97% of the stories are bad.” But if that many independent outlets all reach the same conclusion, isn’t it more likely they’re reflecting reality than conspiring against him?

This isn’t a throwaway grievance. Viktor Orbán in Hungary followed the same path: harass the press, strip licenses, intimidate journalists, and consolidate media under allies. Hungary now ranks near the bottom of Europe in press freedom. That is not by accident — it is by design. Orbán himself admitted in 2014 that he was building an “illiberal state,” and later defended muzzling the press by claiming, “We are fighting against an enemy that is different from us... not open, but hiding; not straightforward, but crafty.” The “enemy” was the independent

media.

Here in the U.S., we already see the echoes. Jimmy Kimmel was shown the door after years of Trump complaints about his mockery. A sitting FCC commissioner has even floated the idea of reviewing licenses of networks critical of Trump. Call it what it is: state intimidation of a free press.

Americans should not comfort themselves that “it can’t happen here.” The man openly promising it is already leading a major party. Orbán’s Hungary is the cautionary tale — a democracy hollowed out, step by step, under the guise of “fairness.” As Orbán once put it, “In the end, the state will have to take responsibility for the future of the press.” That is exactly what Trump is now hinting at.

The First Amendment does not guarantee politicians favorable coverage. It guarantees citizens a press free to expose lies, corruption, and abuse. Per James Madison, 1800 — “To prohibit the people from freely discussing the character and conduct of their rulers... would be a prohibition of the people themselves from the use of their reason.”

Trump isn’t defending free speech. He is repeating the oldest trick in the autocrat’s book — silence the critics, then silence the people.

Charlie Kirk: Non-Martyr Transfigured into a Faux Martyr Greg Scott, Livermore

“Charlie Kirk did not deserve to be assassinated. But I’m overwhelmed seeing the flags of the United States of America at half-staff, calling this nation to honor and venerate a man who was an unapologetic racist and spending all of his life sowing seeds of division and hate into this land and hearing people with selective rage who were mad about Charlie Kirk, but didn’t give a damn about Melissa Hortman and her husband when they were shot in their home. Tell me I ought to have compassion for the death of a man who had no respect for my own life. I am sorry, but there’s nowhere in Bible where we are taught to honor evil. And how you die does not redeem how you lived. You do not become a hero in your death when you are a weapon of the enemy in your life. I can abhor the

violence that took your life, but I don’t have to celebrate how you chose to live. I am overwhelmed.” (Pastor Howard-John Wesley, Alfred Street Baptist Church, Virginia)

Charlie Kirk stated, “I can’t stand empathy. I think empathy is a made-up, New Age term that - - it does a lot of damage, but it is very effective when it comes to politics.” This is very rich, coming from a so-called Christian man with at least \$12 million in personal assets and running the Turning Point USA organization that has an annual revenue of \$140 million. Mr. Kirk disparaged Blacks, Muslims, homosexuals, trans-genders, women, Jews, and immigrants. The Jesus I read about spoke of love and inclusion.

Charlie Kirk made anti-Semitic remarks accusing “Jewish donors” of being “the number one funding mechanism of radical open-border, neoliberal, quasi-Marxist policies, cultural institutions, and nonprofits,” and further charged, “the philosophical foundation of anti-whiteness has been largely financed by Jewish donors in the country,” while Kirk was also supporting the pro-Zionist, Israeli genocidal slaughter of Palestinians.

“If you would look away from the words of Charlie Kirk, from what else would you look away?” (Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Charlie Kirk: Redeemed: A Political Class Finds Its Lost Cause,” Vanity Fair, September 16, 2025)

The “Lost Cause” is the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. Anyone remember the 1873 Colfax massacre in Louisiana history where 50 murdered Blacks were thrown into the river? This mentality and Charlie Kirk’s hateful diatribes against civil rights are considered Christian?

Response to Debate Policies not Personalities David Coats, Livermore

In his recent letter to The Independent, Mr. David Ott implores readers to debate policies, not personalities. This is a fair comment, but I would point out that many of the anti-Trump letters do focus on serious flaws and consequences of the President’s policies.

In his recent letter, Mr. Ott continues to cite what he

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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Dean Swenson (left, holding check) of the Swenson Group, a Konica Minolta dealer in Livermore, presented \$5,000 to Mike Stramaglio of the Patriot Pack, a group of motorcycle riders that supports veterans and their families in the office-technology industry. Patriot Pack members stopped off for lunch and a bit of rest and relaxation during a ride from Arizona to Portland, Ore. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

believes to be the President’s major achievements with no acknowledgement of any negative consequences associated with these achievements.

Mr. Ott apparently believes that Trump’s tariffs will bring about fairer trade positions for the U.S. The President has stated that his tariffs will provide incentives for American companies to begin manufacturing goods domestically. The reality is that it would take many years at a cost of billions of dollars to build the infrastructure required to provide these products domestically. Further, the need for companies to recover some of these expenditures, and the use of higher paid American workers would result in significant price increases that would be passed on to the American consumer. The President promised the American people that he would lower the cost of living. Tariffs will do the opposite. Once the backlog of goods procured by American companies before the tariffs took place is exhausted, we can expect to see price increases for goods that we once bought cheaply.

The President’s tariffs and deportation of illegal (and many legal) aliens are already having a negative impact on our farmers, many of whom are facing bankruptcy due to significant reduction of orders for their goods by foreign countries, and their inability to get the labor needed to milk cows and pick crops.

I acknowledge that the current approach for deporting these “illegals” is fast, but it is done at the expense of ignoring the constitutional requirement for “due process”, as well as court orders to require that due process be afforded.

The President’s harsh deportation, tariffs, and immigration policies are undermining economic growth. There are fewer manufacturing jobs now than in 2024 (33,000 fewer according to Labor Department figures). Analysis by the Wharton School (the President’s alma mater) states that “a long-term crackdown on immigration could shrink the economy by up to 1% of gross domestic product and depress wages for the typical American worker.” The combination of these policies is seen by economists as almost guaranteed to induce stagflation.

Let Us Debate Policies
Ajay Dhillon, Pleasanton

This is in response to Mr. Ott’s letter in the Sept. 15th paper asking to debate policies and not personalities. Unfortunately, the personality of a nation’s leader does affect policies. If a leader has ego issues and has a

habit of lying, will it not affect policies? Yes, some of Mr. Trump’s policies are good, such as controlling the borders and stopping millions of illegal migrants or his attempts of encouraging investment in U.S. and creating manufacturing jobs. Take his crackdown on deporting people who are here illegally. He says that he is deporting dangerous criminals, but in truth, ICE is arresting innocent grandmothers and grandfathers who have been here for 30-40 years and living a peaceful life. ICE is basically creating a reign of terror and reminds one of how people must have been afraid of the Gestapo or the KGB. It is encouraging people to report against each other secretly. It is arresting hundreds of hardworking people, like the raid on a meat processing plant or the Hyundai factory.

Further, Mr. Trump is messing up relations with most of our traditional allies, which have taken years to build. Mr. Trump had claimed that he will stop the Russia/Ukraine war and the Israeli war in Gaza within 24 hours of taking over. He has been a failure on both fronts. I can go on and on, but I think most readers know about most of his failed policies except Mr. Ott who can see no wrong.

End the Tariff/Trade War Nonsense
Barry Brynjulson, Pleasanton

We don’t need balanced trade. If India, for example, can make apparel, textiles and many other things far cheaper than we can, let ‘em. Everybody benefits.

We don’t need more factories with low-paying non-union jobs (Trump, Musk, Bezos, and many other billionaires oppose unions). We need more white-collar, higher paying jobs, along with lower product costs.

Tariffs are predicted to wipe out many small businesses. Of course, Bezos and Amazon will survive, if not thrive.

The trade war with China under Trump 1.0 resulted in \$28 billion in farmer bailout payments. Of course, Trump 1.0 buried those payments from the news media lest they smack of socialism.

The wealth gap has never been wider. The big, beautiful bill’s Medicaid and SNAP cuts along with Trump’s fabricated tariff war will widen the gap. Only the oligarchs want the gap to widen.

Trade and tariff wars are unnecessary for our capitalist society whose cornerstone is free-markets. These ‘wars’ are contrived by a man who likes to throw his notable weight around and has declared bankruptcy multiple times.

The Darkest Age of America
Donna Andersen, Livermore

I have never before responded to Mr. Ott, but between witnessing the daily destruction of our democracy and reading the falsehoods written by Mr. Ott, I feel a need to opine.

First, the Trump “achievements” he listed are either factually incorrect or the opinion of said author. The economy is actually faltering with increasing inflation, fewer jobs, and increasing unemployment. Check your facts, Mr. Ott. Contrary to attracting new investments, other countries are seeking new trade partners due to the volatility of Trump’s tariffs and the imbalance of his trade agreements. South Korea had been building a Hyundai factory (secured by Biden) which would have employed thousands of American workers when completed, but after Trump deported 400 South Korean engineers and specialists in shackles, South Korea is considering stopping all U.S. investments. China stopped buying soybeans from the U.S. in retaliation to Trump’s tariffs and easily found other sources. It is our American farmers who are suffering. Criminals? Over 80% of the deported were hard working, tax paying, community members who had never had a brush with the law.

Second, the idea that we now have safer communities is subjective and not a fact. Trump withheld funding to cities that gutted their crime-fighting budgets and then sent the military to fight crime. I wouldn’t feel safe in a city patrolled by the military. Only dictatorships utilize the military in this manner.

And what about ICE? Since when have masked men jumped out of unmarked vehicles and grabbed people in the USA? Since Trump. The real reason Trump deployed the military was to keep citizens from protesting his ICE tactics. I guarantee that the many Latino U.S. citizens who have been brutally assaulted, harassed, arrested, and even held for a week by ICE don’t feel safer than they did prior to Trump’s reign. Nor do other Latino citizens who wonder when it will happen to them. The fact that the Supreme (supremely sycophantic) Court decided that it’s okay to racially profile people when determining whom to detain and question about their legal status is abhorrent to me.

Mr. Ott failed to mention the ongoing erosion of our civil rights. ICE has been capturing and deporting people without due process. Renowned scientists and experts are being fired without cause. We no longer have freedom of speech or freedom of the press.

Golden age? We are living in the darkest age of America.

Boomer Conservatives
Jared Bielski, Livermore

I truly feel a deep pity and sorrow for the “Boomer conservatives,” I really do. Since their beginnings, they have had an easy life, brought to them by their parents who fought bravely for this country across the Atlantic and Pacific. They were brought into a world torn free from instability and violence not unlike what is happening today, with policies brought about from the many government programs like the GI bill, and fights unions won against the business barons, too frequently paid for in blood. Back then you could easily afford to have a family supported by one low skill entry level job, along with such luxuries as pur-

chasing a home, taking vacations for periods of time, and being able to comfortably rest at night knowing that when retirement comes, social security will help fund those golden days. This all changed however, gradually, with the main turning point being around when Reagan came onto the ballot. Suddenly programs that helped support the middle class were slashed, along with taxes for the wealthy. “Trickle-down economics” wasn’t immediately laughed at out the door, and anything that even smelled of “socialism” was struck down with the full might of the American government. The FBI became a hit squad for the conservatives, assassinating those of us who were protesting for a better world, such as Fred Hampton and John Huggins. Countries invaded at the beck and call of fruit companies, for goodness sake. More and more were the protections against rampant capitalism stripped away until nothing remained but a husk of the cradle that the Boomers were raised in that so many died to build, torn down in less than a life-

time. They have quite literally pulled the ladder up with them as the young generations now struggle to survive in this harsh world that keeps us barely standing. Fast forward to today and we see what has come of the conservative movement; a failing economy, leadership that has pushed all of our allies away, a government so paradoxically inept and corrupt that the universally agreed upon decision to release the Epstein files has been rejected by the Republicans who have control of all of the branches of government. The brainwashing that has occurred is nothing before seen on this earth on how ingrained it is on the Boomer psyche. It’s a travesty what this world is and has to come.

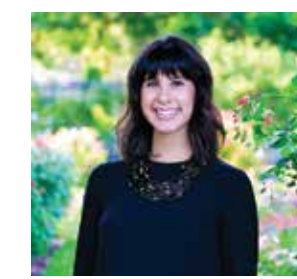


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Participants peruse some of the materials at the 53rd annual Tri-Valley Wood Carvers show Sept. 13 at Veterans Hall in Pleasanton. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

LOANS

(Continued from front page)

during the board’s regular Sept. 11 meeting. “We haven’t needed to do so in the past, because funding allocations from the state and feds were higher.”

Angela Ruggiero, a communications specialist for the Alameda County Office of Education, said that two other Alameda County school

districts, Hayward and Piedmont, are also borrowing from the treasury this year due to reduced funding sources or delays in federal funding.

While PUSD is set to receive more than \$3.6 million in state property-tax funding for August and September, it will only be receiving just more than \$51,500 in Oc-

tober and a little more than \$138,000 in November.

The district is facing a financial challenge, with total expenses expected to be twice as high as its revenue until December. In October, PUSD anticipates receiving nearly \$9.92 million in income, while spending about \$19.8 million.

FUNDING

(Continued from front page)

money for us. It’s money that keeps the surroundings of my business lush, green, vibrant and alive.”

Main Street’s PRIMM Boutique closed its Pleasanton store and moved to Paso Robles after structural issues forced an extended closure earlier this year. Then, at the beginning of September, the city’s beer and ax-throwing venue, Limitless Axes & Ales, closed, followed by Main St. Brewery’s closure on Sept. 21 after 30 years in business. Walmart plans to close its Santa Rita Road location on Oct. 2.

“It seems to be that there are businesses that are having a little bit of trouble keeping up with rent increases, fees, things like that, and just the

overall economics of our community,” Welk said.

Bruce Torquemada, who owns several business properties downtown, shared how vagrant damage to one of his buildings, plus the effects of a homeless person living on the roof of another will result in some \$150,000 in repairs over the next two years. He said that the maintenance required of older buildings combined with unforeseen expenses trickle down as costs that make it difficult for businesses to stay.

“I know a lot of the buildings here are older,” Torquemada said. “The benefit of being a historical town is we’ve got old buildings. The negative is we have old buildings. ... Obviously, if land-

lords are not as burdened with repairing their buildings with something that they weren’t expecting, then obviously we don’t have to raise our rents.”

Councilmembers shared the concerns over the downtown’s vitality, but praised the cooperation between the PDA and businesses.

“Economic vitality downtown is not a someday issue for us; it’s urgent now,” Mayor Jack Balch said. “We’ve seen the closures. The residents are asking what’s coming next, and so are the fellow businesses. They want a vibrant downtown. It’s just about being very clear-eyed about our competition and what we need to do to bolster our economic outlook on the downtown.”

HOPE

(Continued from front page)

professor, who shared their gifts of networking and space to experience public speaking in front of international audiences, as well as provided exposure to different cultures.

“Their involving me at conferences and (in) conversations helped shape my understanding of the world and led me to experiences where if I didn’t have them, I would have been such a different person, with such a limited — not just experience — but my whole personality would be different,” Masoud said.

She is now back in the U.S. on a three-week fundraising mission for the Khayari Organization, which she founded just three months before the war between Israel and Hamas broke out in October 2023. The aim of her organization is to support the leadership and economic empowerment of Palestinian women.

“Khayari” is an Arabic word that means “my choice.”

“And if I want to summarize in one sentence what Khayari is, it’s a safe space that brings Palestinian women together,” Masoud said. “We are there to provide their emerging needs. Whatever they want, we are there to provide. That’s the purpose of

this organization.”

It is also deeply rooted in hope.

“We take hope for granted sometimes, but in Palestine, you have to work for it. You have to seek it. You have to find it.”

And through her mentorship of Palestinian women, Masoud is striving to keep that hope alive by providing them opportunities, resources and training as they navigate their young lives, especially during a time of war.

With a focus on three main areas — identity, communication and conflict management — Khayari works to give women the tools they need to understand the complexities of their Palestinian identities while also helping them carve out fulfilling professional lives.

In some ways, Masoud is paying it forward to her Palestinian sisterhood.

“Were it not for these experiences (I’ve had),” she said, “I might still be living in a small bubble because in Palestine it’s easy to do that. The occupation forces you to live within gated communities. It’s getting harder and harder to move around. Why would you want to get out when it can be stressful or

difficult or exhausting, or even life-threatening?”

As a result, many women have never traveled even outside the confines of their own small villages.

“I’ve been blessed with all these opportunities that helped me get out and burst that bubble,” Masoud said. “And it’s one of the reasons why I started this organization. How can I provide similar resources and opportunities for women’s advancement in their lives that would affect them on a social, personal and psychological level within the community and hopefully abroad, and give them the opportunities to experience culture outside of Bethlehem, as well as outside of Palestine?”

Yoshii shared a recent exchange he had with a man who had first heard Masoud speak when she was in the U.S. in 2014.

“He said he remembered her talking about always having hope,” Yoshii said. “It really hit him in a way that transformed his faith, that if this woman from Bethlehem could have hope, and as a Christian is keeping hope alive in her life, and in the life of the people. Then certainly he could keep hope alive here, as well.”

By December, however, the district will receive its first state property-tax payment, which will help improve its cash flow. This payment is expected to be about \$38.7 million.

The short-term borrowing comes with rigid restrictions, according to the staff report. The maximum authorized

amount is \$15 million for Fiscal Year 2025-26, and the borrowing shall not exceed 85% of the anticipated revenues accruing to the district. Additionally, the funds must be repaid by May 1. The borrowed funds will be prioritized for replacement from revenues accruing to the district before fulfilling any other obligations

from such revenue.

Overall, the estimated interest costs based on a rate of 3.5% for seven months are projected to be about \$310,000, and will come from the General Fund.

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ADU

(Continued from front page)

compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

“Ideas include a bigger bathroom for wheelchair accessibility, a pergola style of shower, which has more open space, grab bars in the shower and by the toilet, ramps and wider doorways,” Camero said.

Each city issues permits for ADUs within its boundaries, while Alameda County issues permits for ADUs in unincorporated areas. Dublin saw 16 ADU applications in 2022, 14 in 2023 and 16 in 2024, while Pleasanton received 14 ADU applications in 2022, 12 in 2023 and 36 in 2024. Livermore had 91 ADU applications in 2022, 50 in 2023 and 55 in 2024, and Alameda County took in 83 ADU applications in 2022, 114 in 2023 and 120 in 2024.

The lower numbers for Livermore in the past two years don’t necessarily indicate that ADUs are unpopular there. The downturn in the economy, as well as increased costs for labor and supplies could certainly be factors.

Issues with building ADUs can include high upfront construction costs, fluctuating interest rates and limited access to affordable financing. Some property owners are worried about ongoing expenses, such as increased insurance premiums, sewer fees and property taxes.

Residents of Dublin, Liver-

more and Pleasanton can now get rebates from their cities for certain ADUs. The funding is provided by the California Department of Housing and Community Development through the ADU Accelerator Program for Senate District 7.

The district is comprised of 15 cities in the East Bay. Property owners can apply for rebates from \$2,500 to \$15,000, depending on the amount of square feet in the ADU. Dublin received \$136,352 from the program, while Livermore received \$158,626 and Pleasanton \$142,043. Alameda County did not receive or distribute funds from the program.

Eligibility for the rebates depends on the size of the ADU and whether it is deed-restricted for low-income housing.

The program is designed to encourage the construction of smaller ADUs. Units larger than 1,000 square feet are not eligible for rebates. As of early September, Dublin had received seven applications and had awarded \$5,000 to one qualifying applicant. Livermore had received 10 applications, totaling \$50,000 in requested rebates, and had awarded \$10,000 to qualifying applicants. Pleasanton had received 20 applications, totaling \$127,500 in requested rebates, and had awarded \$27,000 to qualifying applicants. The program distributes

funds on a first-come, first-served basis.

Jennifer Duffy, president of Hello Housing, said it can be harder to build ADUs in unincorporated parts of the county. Many property owners there cannot connect ADUs to city water and sewer systems.

“That makes the cost and completion timeline for an ADU go up significantly in rural areas,” Duffy said.

Duffy said the large, uniform lots in cities make it easy to build and position ADUs in ways that avoid friction with neighbors. For example, a neighbor might raise concerns about an ADU with a direct view of a neighbor’s bedroom window.

“In some spots, when property owners want to leave the backyard free, we see an interest in junior ADUs (JADUs). This is where a property owner converts part of their home, like a bedroom, into a separate living space,” Duffy said.

Local governments are motivated to issue ADU permits because it increases their housing stock without significant neighborhood opposition.

“Building these small units within the community without adding infrastructure and more capacity for sewer and water systems promotes ‘stealth density,’” Duffy said. “ADUs don’t trigger the ‘Not In My Backyard’ (NIMBY) responses like multi-story housing developments.”

Property owners should recognize that issues to watch for also include concerns over available parking, ADUs casting shadows on other homes and ADUs blocking scenic views.

Learn more about ADUs at the Alameda County ADU Resource Center: <https://www.adu.acgov.org/>.

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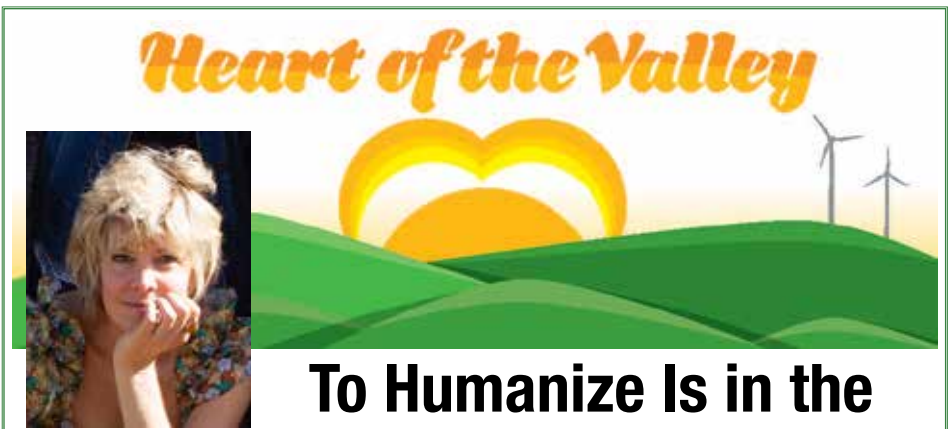
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To Humanize Is in the Eyes of the Beholder

By Christina Cavallaro

TRI-VALLEY — Mrs. Olive Greene was my Spanish teacher at Livermore High School in the late 1980s. And as kids are wont to do, we of course thought we were the only clever ones who saw the humor in her name. We’d snicker in the back of class about the poor, kind Señora Verde being saddled with such a comedically fruity namesake.

It wasn’t until all these years later that I discovered Mrs. Greene was very much in on the joke. This simple truth came to me through a beautiful telling of her life story in an obituary written by her family following her recent death.

In it, I learned about Mrs. Greene’s early life in the midlands of Ireland, where she hopped fences, rode horses and climbed trees in which she would quietly read books. Words like “hippy-adjacent” were used to describe her young adult days leading up to her falling in love with an American physics student named Jim Greene. He was the real first to find the amusement in bestowing upon his new wife the colorful name, convincing her to drop her maiden “Egan” in favor of it.

Through that story of her life, I suddenly saw Mrs. Greene as so much more than my high school teacher with the funny name.

In my job as a writer, I listen to a lot of people’s stories and in the retelling comes a certain responsibility — perhaps largely self-imposed — to do right by them. For me, that means sometimes shining a light on a facet they may not have seen before that, to me, reflects their essence.

I recently wrote a profile about a well-known Pleasanton photographer, Robert Philis of Robert Thomas Photography, who had passed away at age 90. I didn’t have the pleasure of meeting Philis before his death but had a chance to sit down with his ex-wife, Ardis Merwin, who generously shared details of the chapters of life she had experienced with Philis when he helped her raise her kids as his own.

After the story came out, Merwin said she’d heard a little “static” from her grandkids thinking the story was going to be all about their grandfather and wondered if their larger-than-life grandmother had perhaps inserted herself a bit too much into the story. You heard it here, Merwins: I did the inserting. Just as the sun brings light and order to the Earth, Philis’ ex-wife illuminated the details of the quirky, talented photographer and helped me bring him to life on the page in a way no rattling off of dates and achievements ever could.

Last October I visited a combined 6th-8th grade art class at Sunol Glen School. The students were at work on a special community project: a public display of drawings of the front entrance of the iconic school to be screened on banners and hung along Main Street in honor of this year’s 100th anniversary of the school.

Then art teacher Heather Cass said some of the students wanted their drawing to be an exact depiction of what was in front of them. “But art isn’t really like that, because we all see it differently,” Cass said.

Life, it seems, doesn’t work that way, either. It’s messy and deep and complicated and, at times, heart-achingly beautiful, but rarely is it a what-you-see-is-what-you-get kind of a thing.

Last month, I had a chance to interview a 100-year-old Livermore resident, Edmond Aboujudom, who lived through the Nakba (Arabic for “catastrophe”) of 1948 in Palestine. That refers to the displacement and dispossession of more than 750,000 people from their homes and land in the leadup to the establishment of Israel, the event that created a massive refugee population, many of whom settled in the Gaza Strip. In many ways, that legacy impacts the current situation there.

That is a fact of Aboujudom’s life. But what’s also true is that he was a brilliant athlete, an exceptional student, a Christian — and a bit of a troublemaker. He loved his mother’s cooking, played jokes on his siblings and adored his wife of 54 years. I also learned that his TV is set 24/7 to the Tennis Channel, just like mine.

After his story was published, I heard from a Livermore resident who said she had enjoyed Aboujudom’s story very much. “You humanized him,” she said.

That comment stayed with me because I know there are multiple sides to every story. And these days, so many stories in our world are extremely charged with polarizing opinions.

And storytelling itself, like art, can be subjective. And while the pen is mightier than the sword, as writers today, it can feel just as lethal or have devastating effects if handled irresponsibly.

After all, the life of a human is in our hands.

Do you have tidbits about the Tri-Valley or know of interesting people, places, events or unique perspectives that should be featured in the Heart of the Valley monthly column or podcast? If so, we want to hear from you. Please email me at christina@independentnews.com.

Report Shows Mostly Good News For Housing, Human Services

By Ruth Roberts

LIVERMORE — The city’s Housing and Human Services Commission recently received a report on grant progress and updates among its many Tri-Valley recipients for Fiscal Year 2024-25, and the news was positive.

The commission received the update, which included information on goals met in both funding provided and clients served, during this month’s regular meeting.

“We track our contracts throughout the year to ensure the non-profits that were provided grant funding are on schedule to fully spend the funds awarded, and we track if they are set to meet their goals,” said Josh Thurman, human services program manager. “If we see that a non-profit is struggling to spend their funds or meet their goal, we try to assist the best we can. It doesn’t happen very often, but if we do see a non-profit having some issues, it’s generally because of staffing issues.”

Of the \$1.2 million in total funding provided, \$954,000 has so far been spent to serve nearly 6,000 clients, up from the commission’s goal of serving

3,488 clients during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Factors determining the number of clients served include items such as community outreach, available funding, eligibility rules and the number of qualified non-profit partners that receive grant money. The commission itself does not directly provide services but instead acts as an advisory body to the city council, overseeing the distribution of grants to organizations that do.

This year’s grant recipients number 15 agencies, including CityServe, Open Heart Kitchen, Tri-Valley Haven, the Calico Center and Axis Community Health Care.

In terms of service, CityServe, a faith-based nonprofit that provides resources and logistical support to local churches for community outreach, outdid its objective of serving 564 clients, instead helping 947 clients in need. Axis Community Health did much the same, serving 252 clients, with 311% goal progress over its projected 81 individuals. And Calico, an organization that provides support for child-abuse intervention, exceeded its goal of 30 clients by 10.

Of those who have not met their target goals, such as Open Heart Kitchen, which serves hot meals to those in need, their numbers were shy of the goal, with 122 of their clients served out of a goal of 300. But, Thurman said, in this particular case, there were mitigating circumstances, as there often are, making keeping an eye on their progress essential.

“While the specific goal at the Robert Livermore Community Center for OHK was not met due to the transition of to-go meal operations to Vineyard, OHK has more than fulfilled its commitment,” Thurman said. “They remain a vital community resource, and we are more than happy with their performance.”

Livermore’s housing and human services grants are funded through a combination of sources, including federal grants such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as city allocations from the General Fund.

For a complete list of the grant recipients, visit bit.ly/46gs2Qf

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, Sept. 25 925 GIVES

925 GIVES is a community-powered day of giving led by Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF). Rooted in the 925 area code, it unites donors, nonprofits, and local leaders to strengthen our region. Through Sept. 15, nonprofits can sign up to participate and rally community support. The donation window opened Aug. 25, building momentum to the 24-hour Giving Day on Sept. 25—featuring real-time donations, leaderboard showdowns, match challenges, prizes, and nonstop celebration. See 925GIVES.org

Thursdays, Sept. 25; Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23 GRIEF WORKSHOP

The death of a loved one is unlike any other loss. Although there is no right or wrong path, there are stepping stones that are part of each grief journey which will be explored in this workshop. Held at St. Elizabeth Seton Church, 4001 Stoneridge Dr., in Pleasanton at 7 p.m. Space is limited, pre-registration is required. \$20 donation is requested. For more information, please call Barbara at 925-846-3904.

Saturday, Sept. 27 POPS ON THE GREEN

Enjoy POPS on the Green with the Livermore-Amador Symphony and Element 116 youth jazz band, Sept. 27 from 3 to 4 p.m., on the lawn at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street, Livermore, with FREE, fun, family-friendly music for everyone! Hear a variety of music, from Mission Impossible to the Music Man! Bring your family and friends and a picnic basket, blanket or lawn chairs. Costumes welcomed. See LivermoreAmadorSymphony.org/pops.html.

Saturday, Sept. 27 PLANT AND CUTTING SWAP

Bring plant cuttings, extra plants or seed starts, succulents, bulbs or tubers to share and swap with other gardeners in our community. All types of plants are welcome. Please label each plant and be ready to share basic care information. This event will take place in the Community Room at the Dublin Library, 200 Civic Plaza, on Sept. 27 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 27 MASTERCLASS/CONCERT WITH VIOLINIST ARIANA KIM

Grammy-nominated violinist and Cornell University professor Ariana Kim will visit the Tri-Valley to work with young musicians from the NorCal Symphony Orchestra. On Sept. 26, Friday night, she will work with orchestra students in a rehearsal and give a public masterclass at 9:30 a.m. on September 27 with four pre-selected young violinists from Bay Area at Lynnewood United Methodist Church in Pleasanton. Later, on Saturday, Sept. 27 at 7 p.m., Ariana will perform a concert at the same venue, featuring a program half solo and half with the Bay Area-based Resonance Quartet. See calmusicinstitute.com/master-class/ for more info.

Saturdays, Sept. 27; Oct. 4, 11 VEGETABLE GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS COURSE

The UC Master Gardeners of Alameda County are offering “From Seed to Harvest: Vegetable Gardening for Beginners” — a free, 5-week, in-person course designed for beginning gardeners in Alameda County. The course will cover how to plan, plant, nurture, sustain and harvest your garden. Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Las Positas College in Livermore. Space is limited; for more information, go to acmg.ucanr.edu and scroll down to ‘classes’.

Sunday, Sept. 28 1900’S INNOVATION EXPO

Take a step back in time to the early 1900s on Sept. 28 from 1-5 p.m. at Hagemann Ranch, 455 Olivina Ave., Livermore. Win prizes at the scavenger hunt. Explore the old farm equipment and ponder the mystery objects. Joey T and Friends band will be performing, and The Amazing Cervantes will do two magic shows. Tri Valley Woodcarvers will be displaying their art, and Good News Bears are joining. Busy Buzzy Bots will have STEM projects for sale. Free and always family friendly.

Wednesday, Oct. 1 JOIN DUBLIN MAYOR SHERRY HU FOR PIZZA AND CONVERSATION

Dublin Mayor Sherry Hu will be holding a “Pizza with the Mayor” event on Oct. 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Mountain Mike’s Pizza, 8951 San Ramon Road. The community is cordially invited to enjoy pizza and conversation with the mayor.

Saturday, Oct. 4 TRI-VALLEY TEXAS HOLD’EM TOURNAMENT

CEI Foundation’s Tri-Valley Texas Hold’em Tournament is back!

Proceeds benefit memory and dementia care programs at the Center for Elders’ Independence and mental health grants for seniors through Three Valleys Community Foundation. With every ticket, donation, and drink sale, you can help make a powerful difference! On Oct. 4 at 5 p.m. at Roundhouse Marketplace in San Ramon. See givebutler.com/4F4Z24

Saturday, Oct. 4 EXPLORE OHLONE CULTURE

Join naturalists from East Bay Regional Park District to explore the history and experience of the Ohlone, the more than two dozen tribes to first call the San Francisco Bay Area home. This program will provide an introduction to parts of Ohlone culture, their connection to the land and to its resources. Learn a traditional skill that is still in use today. This program is geared to adults and teens. At the Dublin Library, 200 Civic Plaza, on Oct. 4 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, Oct. 4 GRAVEYARD GROOVES: A SPOOKY HALLOWEEN SPECTACULAR

Get ready for a spine-tingling night of fun at Graveyard Grooves, a Halloween Jukebox Musical Fundraiser, presented by Royal Theater Academy and the City of Dublin. Performers aged 7+ bring the best in Broadway tunes, musical films, and haunting Halloween pop culture in a concert-style showcase. With a light narrative weaving the songs together, this event skips fancy sets and costumes and focuses on what matters most — song, story, and chills for a cause. All proceeds help expand RTA’s Audio Technology Collection. At Dublin High School Center for Performing Arts and Education, 8151 Village Parkway, on Oct. 4, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES LIVERMORE HISTORYMOBILE

The Livermore HistoryMobile needs docents who are available during the day to guide and engage Livermore’s third graders. These visits take place during the months of April and May when the schools are visited. The kids love being in a “touch me” museum; something exciting in our virtual age. The experience is very rewarding. If interested, please contact Nancy Mulligan: n.mulligan@comcast.net.

QUEST SCIENCE CENTER

Quest’s vision is to connect everyone to the value of science. Volunteers are needed to facilitate science activities at community events. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Director of Education, Dan, at dgolub@quest-science.org.

CANTABELLA CHILDREN’S CHORUS

The chorus needs a volunteer bookkeeper to post income and expenses using QuickBooks. Approximately 8 hours/month from home. Volunteers are also welcome to join the fundraising team. Please contact president@cantabella.org.

ONGOING EVENTS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

THURSDAY DUBLIN FARMERS MARKET

The seasonal Dublin Farmers’ Market will run each Thursday, from 4 to 8 p.m., at Emerald Glen Park, 4201 Central Parkway, through Sept. 25, rain or shine. Come out to find your farmers’ market favorites, such as locally grown fresh produce, baked goods, honey, nuts, pasta, and more.

SATURDAY PLEASANTON FARMERS MARKET

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

SUNDAY LIVERMORE DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

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

WINGS — WOMEN IN GOD’S SPIRIT

WINGS, Women in God’s Spirit, is a faith enrichment group of intergenerational Catholic women who meet October thru May on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, 1315 Lomitas Ave., Livermore. The WINGS 2025-2026 season begins Oct. 2. Enjoy a variety of speaker presentations, small group discussion, fellowship and more. All are welcome! For information, see www.stcharleslivermore.org/wings.

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

Filipino Barrio Fest Set for Oct. 5

The Livermore Filipino-American Organization will host the annual Filipino Barrio Festival at the Bankhead Plaza in downtown Livermore from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 5.

The street festival, in celebration of Filipino

American National Month, will include food and craft vendors, a dance competition, scavenger hunt, mobile skatepark and an awards ceremony.

Entertainment will be provided by MC Preach, DJ Jaybeez, Halau Makana

Lani dance school, The RAW Band, LFAO Cultural Dance Troupe, Pallen’s Martial Arts, Miko, Maddie B, Tracy Cruz, UJAM, Debaser, 5ftJyants and The Osada 3.

The outdoor festival is free. For more information, go to livermorefilam.org

Rotary Club Holds BBQ Fundraiser

The Livermore Valley Rotary Club will hold a Community BBQ Bash & Fundraiser at Carnegie Park in downtown Livermore from 3 p.m. to 7

p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 18.

The family-friendly event will include bounce houses, magic shows, face painting, an Altamont Cruisers car

show, the Livermore Heritage Guild history van and a meet-and-greet with Livermore firefighters and police officers.

Quest Science Center will also host a booth with interactive exhibits, animal rescue organizations will have pets available for adoption, and several other nonprofit organizations will highlight their community service efforts.

Livermore’s Stagecoach band will provide entertainment.

Admission is free. Barbecue plates, drinks and desserts will be available for purchase.

The Rotary Club said the goal is to raise \$20,000 with the proceeds supporting scholarships and local projects.

“This first-of-its-kind family event hosted by the Livermore Valley Rotary Club is all about bringing our community together, enjoying a fun afternoon while raising funds to reinvest right back into the place we call home,” said event chair Mony Nop.

The Community Health Education Foundation (CHEF) will match donations made through the CHEF website at 50%, according to the Rotary Club. To donate, go to chefgivingcommunity.org/ThriveMore.

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Kaiser Permanente Plans Rated Best in California

Kaiser Permanente Northern California has the highest rated health plans in California and among the highest in the nation, according to the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). NCQA is a national non-

profit organization that rates health plans based on a range of clinical service measures including consumer experience, prevention, population health and treatment. Kaiser Permanente's Medicare and commercial

health plans in Northern California each received five-star ratings, the highest possible. Nationally, only 11 health plans received five-star ratings. "These national ratings speak to the high-quality care

Kaiser Permanente Northern California provides to its members and patients every day and our efforts to improve health care outcomes," said interim president Mike Bowers. "Our focus on treatment, prevention, and an

overall exceptional patient care experience is why our health plans are recognized as best in the state and among the top health plans nationally." NCQA rated nearly 1,000 Medicare, Medicaid

and commercial healthcare plans this year, based on the 2024 Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), the most widely used performance measurement tool in health care.

Congregation Beth Emek Prays for Peace

Congregation Beth Emek in Pleasanton celebrated the Jewish new year this week with prayers for the end of fighting in Gaza, the release of hostages held by Hamas, and an end to the suffering of Palestinians. "For Jews, the New Year is a time of reflection, a time to consider our deeds and to resolve to live up to our highest ideals in the coming year," said Rabbi Dr.

Laurence Elis Milder. "This year in particular, we are deeply concerned about the welfare of Israelis who have been held hostage in Gaza for two years. We pray for a swift end to the war in Gaza, for the immediate release of the hostages, for relief to the suffering of Palestinians, and security for all." War between Israel and Hamas, a militant Palestinian organization, broke

out in October 2023 when Hamas launched a surprise attack on an Israeli community, killing more than 1,100 Israelis and foreign nationals and taking 251 hostages. More than 65,000 Palestinians in Gaza have reportedly died in the Israeli counteroffensive. Congregation Beth Emek is a Reform Judaism synagogue in Pleasanton. The congregation ob-

served Rosh Hashanah, the start of the Jewish new year, with evening services on Monday, Sept. 22, and morning services on Tuesday, Sept. 23. The Jewish new year is celebrated with candle lighting, festive meals and the sounding of a ram's horn. Milder said the two-day observance marks the beginning of the year 5786 on the Jewish calendar.

Dublin To Offer Sensory Splash Swims

A program introduced by Dublin last year for special-needs swimmers with neurodiverse sensory sensitivities will return to The Wave aquatic center's indoor natatorium in October. During the Sensory Splash times, music will be turned off in the natatorium and whistles will be used by lifeguards only in emergencies. The city said sensory-friendly toys and a designated quiet space will also be provided so those with sensory sensitivities and their families can enjoy recreational swimming in a calm environment. Sensory Splash times at The Wave natatorium, 4201 Central Parkway, will be from 10:30 a.m. to noon the second Sunday of the month, beginning Oct. 12 and running through April 12, 2026. The cost is \$6 per person, and every sensory-sensitive swimmer must have a caregiver in the water within arm's reach at all times. To register for the program, go to tinyurl.com/arpauut7.

LVA Launches \$1 Million Fundraising Effort

Livermore Valley Arts (LVA) has launched a \$1 million fundraising campaign to sustain and grow programs for the Tri-Valley region. LVA, which operates the Bankhead Theater and Bothwell Arts Center in Livermore, presents or promotes more than 400 events annually, ranging from nationally known touring artists and

local theater groups to multicultural celebrations and arts programs for veterans, students and underserved communities. LVA said the fundraising campaign comes in the face of a \$600,000 shortfall last year. This year, however, LVA said local patrons have pledged to match every donation made between

now and Dec. 31, 2025, up to \$500,000. "This is an extraordinary opportunity for our community to double its impact," said CEO Chris Carter. "From performances and youth education to free community events and cultural celebrations, Livermore Valley Arts exists to bring people together through the transformative power of the

arts. This challenge match ensures those programs will continue to thrive." Donations can be made online at LivermoreArts.org. Donations can also be made by phone at 925-583-2313, by email at membership@lvpac.org or by regular mail to Livermore Valley Arts, 2400 First St., Livermore.

The American Red Cross Sets Dublin Blood Drive

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive at the Dublin Civic Center, 100 Civic Plaza, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 3. The city is encouraging donors to sign up at redcrossblood.org, using the code "DublinCommunity" or zip code 94568.

OBITUARIES

Rosalie Challberg

Rosalie Challberg, 79, of Livermore, California, passed away peacefully on Sept. 13, 2025. She was born in South Gate, California, and grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, before moving to Livermore, where she graduated from high school in 1964. She worked at Vallecitos until 1972, where she met her husband Roy Challberg of 56 years.

She is survived by her husband Roy; two daughters, Heather and Nancy; and two grandchildren Annaka and Isak. She had a passion for archaeology and reading; loved animals, music, dancing and travel. She will be remembered as a devoted wife, a loving mother and grandmother who was always kind and welcoming to everyone she met.



Vincent Avila Sept. 30, 1938 — Sep. 11, 2025

Vincent Avila was born in Monte Vista, Colorado, to Fred and Senforosa Avila. He was married to Leah Gallegos for 68 wonderful years, and together they built a beautiful life and family. Vincent was the proud father of three children: Vonzel Nakashima, Renée Avila, and Vincent Kirk Avila. He was also blessed with eight grandsons and eight great-grandchildren, all of whom brought him immense joy. He faithfully served in the

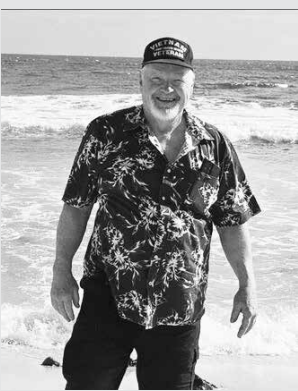


U.S. Navy for eight years and later dedicated 30 years of his career to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Vincent will be remembered for his devotion to family, his strong work ethic, and the love and guidance he shared throughout his life. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. "If tears could build a stairway and memories a lane, I'd walk right up to heaven and bring you home again." Rest in peace, Papa

Celebration of Life

George M. Ross, Jr. July 9, 1952 - July 31, 2025

George M. Ross, Jr. passed peacefully on July 31, 2025, with his wife by his side, in their home in Fallbrook, California, after suffering from a second stroke. George was born on July 9, 1952, in South Gate, California and was raised in San Jose, California. He graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School in 1970. Shortly after high school, he enlisted in the Air Force and was deployed to Vietnam. After returning stateside, George was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. George was honorably discharged in October 1975. Between raising the family and working full-time, he utilized the GI Bill to continue his education. He graduated from the University of San Francisco with a bachelor's degree in computer science in 1991. He married the love of his life, Linda Lascurain Ross, on Nov. 15, 1975, at the First Presbyterian Church in Santa Clara, California. They lived in San Jose and welcomed their sons, George and David. George changed jobs and moved the family to Milpitas, California, where they welcomed two more sons, Jason and Sean.

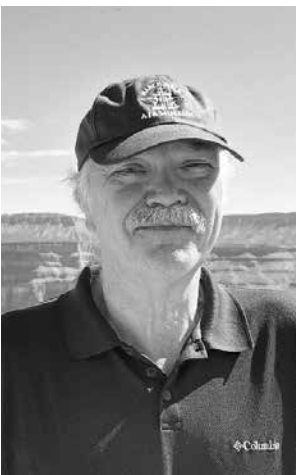


National Games in Ohio. He was the assistant wrestling coach at Granada High School in Livermore where David and Jason both wrestled. He also attended Sean's German Soccer team games. George's career in the high-tech industry spanned 29 years. His favorite position was as the Project Manager for Sun Microsystems. He enjoyed going to work every day where he interfaced with his team. On March 7, 2011, George and Linda received news that their son, Jason was severely injured while deployed to Afghanistan. As Jason healed at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, George stayed with Jason until he was able to transfer to Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego in October 2011. Linda moved to San Diego shortly thereafter. George was Jason's primary caregiver until George had a massive stroke in January 2025. Jason, his daughters, (Stacy and Jackie), George and Linda moved to Fallbrook in August 2015 after Jason received a Smart Home from the Gary Sinise Foundation. George was a man of strong faith in the Lord. While living in

Livermore, George served with the First Presbyterian Church youth ministry and volunteered on mission trips. After moving to Fallbrook, George became active in the Riverside Church weekly Men's Bible Study Group and volunteered at their annual Harvest Festival making balloon sculptures. George loved traveling with Linda on cruises, touring Scotland, Mexico, the Hawaiian Islands, road trips, wine tasting, staying at B and B's and going on family vacations. George was easy-going and loved being around family and friends. He especially loved spending time with his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed the outdoors, cycling, long rides on his Harley Davidson motorcycle, astronomy, science, math, telling "Dad" jokes, driving his Mustang with the top down, and cooking. George is survived by his loving wife, Linda Lascurain Ross. His sons, George M. Ross, III, David M. Ross (spouse Miriam Shapira), Jason M. Ross, and Sean T. Ross. His five grandchildren, Dylan, Ethan, Noah, Stacy and Jackie. His brothers, Lance Ross (spouse Evelyn Ross) and Bruce Ross. His sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, cousins and numerous nieces and nephews. His father-in-law, Joe Lascurain and spouse Jessie Lascurain. He was predeceased by his parents, George M. Ross, Sr. and Joanne Cade Ross, and his brother, Charles Ross. George will be deeply missed by all who knew him, but his legacy of kindness, love, and friendship will live on in the lives he touched. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking for donations in George's honor to the Gary Sinise Foundation: <https://donate.garysinisefoundation.org/give/718994/#/donation/checkout> A Celebration of Life will be on Oct. 4, 2025, at the First Presbyterian Church located at 2020 5th St., Livermore, CA 94550 at 1:00 p.m. followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall

Mark E. Sisemore Sept. 17, 1958 - Sept. 15, 2025

Mark Sisemore, a devoted brother, son, uncle and friend, passed away on Sept. 15, 2025, in Henderson, Nevada, at the age of 66. He was born on Sept. 17, 1958, and spent most of his life in Livermore, California, before later making Henderson, Nevada his home. Mark was preceded in death by his parents, Clyde and Clarice Sisemore. He is survived by his brother, Kevin Sisemore; his sister, Julie Gee; sister-in-law, Marie Labedz; brother-in-law, Bob Gee; and his nieces, Emily, Megan, and



Nicole Gee. His family will always treasure the many memories of time spent with him, filled with love and laughter. Those who knew Mark will remember his kindness, steady presence, and devotion to his family. He found joy in life's simple moments, and his warmth and care touched everyone around him. He will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered. A private family remembrance will be held to honor his life.

James Christian Johnstone Sept. 28, 1949 — Sept. 1, 2025

A true Californian, James was born to Robert Johnstone and Herma Buck on Sept. 28, 1949, in Los Angeles, California. James was also a loving big brother to his younger sister, Patricia. James graduated with the class of 1968 from Lompoc High School. After graduating High School, he then attended Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria. James then went on to serve in the United States Air Force for four years. He was stationed at McClellan Air Force Base, Sacramento, California, where he met the love of his life, Sharon Myers, who was involved with the United Servicemen's Organization (USO) at the time. While in the Air Force, James was deployed to Thailand. After separating from the Air Force, James attended California State University, Chico, graduating with a degree in Plastic Design, which earned him the career title of Product Design and Development Engineer. Being a hard worker



throughout his life, James had many different jobs; one of which included Memorex, where he designed the smokey colored covers for cassette tapes. While working for Comenco, he made medical water filters. Then, during his time with Worlds of Wonder, he designed G.I. Joe Laser Tag. He also had a patent for a metal detector while working for Fisher Development, and between jobs he was a consultant through his own business of Plastic Solutions. While always found wearing a ball cap, in James' free

time he enjoyed working in the garage on his beloved racecar. He was a member of the Sports Car Club of America. He was in the process of restoring his Triumph spitfire so that he could participate in Autocross type racing. James captured his love for nature while dabbling in photography. He also enjoyed capturing radiance in the love of his life's smile through many different angles. When relaxing at home, Doctor Who and Big Bang Theory were always favorites to watch on the television. One of James' favorite day trips was to drive to Santa Nella with Sharon just to have a bowl of split pea soup, until they learned how to make it themselves. James found pleasure in doing charity work and donating his time to the Livermore Homeless Refuge. He was also a 30-year member with the Elks 2117 and an Envoy Member of Beta Sigma Phi. James loved reading and was curious about the Universe and what lies on the other side.

Amador Valley Battered, Not Beaten Despite Winless Start

With East Bay Athletic League Play Looming, Injury-Riddled Dons Looking To Get on Track Against Crosstown Rival Foothill

By Mitch Stephens

BRENTWOOD — The 44-person Amador Valley football team, many in street clothes, gathered tightly in front of the visiting stands to partake in “Pride Jacks,” a short post-game jumping-jack salute to its fans.

The couple hundred in attendance, clad in purple and white, cheered enthusiastically until the Dons finished and jogged briskly back to the sideline, where head coach Danny Jones addressed them passionately but quietly, reminding them that he loved them, to stay the course and turn down any off-field noise.

“We know the truth of where we’re at and where we are going,” he told the team.

When the huddle broke, players and coaches exchanged fist bumps and hugs, and greetings of “good game” and “next week.”

The residue of a 28-20 defeat at Liberty-Brentwood on Sept. 19 and a 0-4 start was barely recognizable.

Despite never leading and having a gallant fourth-quarter rally fall painfully short on an incomplete pass in the end zone on the game’s final play, the Dons, coming off the greatest season in

school history, appeared dented, but upbeat.

Fatigued, but resolute. Disappointed, but not broken.

After all, they did have history on their side. Last season, they started 1-3 and went on to win nine of 10, capture the program’s first North Coast Section

championship and a CIF Northern California Division 3-AA crown.

On Friday, Sept. 26, the 2025 Dons hope to start their own turnaround with a home game against arch-rival Foothill. Kickoff is set for 7:15 p.m.

“It’s not where you start, but where you fin-

ish,” said senior linebacker and strong safety Nehemia “Nemo” Fungula, a 6-foot-1, 190-pounder who has committed to Northern Arizona. “I think as a team, we just gotta stick together, rally together and stay on the bus.”

The “bus” is a term Jones and the coaching

All four losses — to defending state 3-A champion Vanden-Fairfield (21-14), Monterey Trail-Elk Grove (14-10), Downey-Modesto (40-28) and Liberty — have been winnable.

“Every game, there’s been one small thing,” Jones said.

The loss to Liberty came

running back Vincent Malorana (70 yards, one touchdown), Tyson Jetter (five catches, 67 yards, one touchdown), Jason Larson (two quarterback sacks) and Fungula (eight tackles, and an interception).

Harrington, an Idaho State commit making just his second start this season, had 13 catches for 253 yards and a touchdown versus Downey on Sept. 12. Against Liberty, he made a leaping grab of a 50-50 ball that he turned into a 51-yard touchdown to close the deficit to 7-6 just before halftime.

After the Liberty special-teams touchdowns made it 21-6, Malorana capped a nifty 70-yard drive with an 18-yard score, cutting it to 21-12. When Bell scored on a 21-yard run with 6:02 left in the fourth, the Dons looked cooked.

But Kovacs had four completions on the next drive, capped by a 14-yard touchdown strike to Jetter. A two-point conversion pass made it 28-20, but when Liberty quickly struck on a 53-yard completion, Amador Valley looked sunk once more.

Once again, the Dons came up with a big play, recovering a fumble at their own 20. On fourth-and-18 from their own 12, Jones designed a hook-and-lateral play that went for 30, setting up a 76-yard drive that ended at the Liberty 22.

On the game’s final play, Kovacs’ sideline fade toward Jetter near the end zone fell incomplete.

“I try to keep my head up, keep grinding and keep my guys with me,” Jetter said. “I thought we might win it in the end, but it didn’t go our way. It’s been tough with all the injuries, but our focus is always forward. Never backwards.”

A grand life philosophy, as well.



Amador Valley football coach Danny Jones spoke to the team Sept. 19 after a difficult 28-20 loss at Liberty-Brentwood left the defending CIF NorCal champion Dons 0-4 this season. (Photo — Lizeth Lafferty)



MitchMash



Dublin Runs to Title

By Mitch Stephens

CONCORD — Dublin High School is known for its athletic facilities, from a state-of-the-art basketball/volleyball gymnasium to a robust football and track stadium, all of which the North Coast Section rents out for playoff events.

Those facilities, no doubt, help draw student-athletes to the school.

Cross-country, on the other foot, simply draws athletes who strictly love to run, and judging from the Gaels’ early 2025 returns, that love translates to success.

Led by longtime coach Chris Williams, the Dublin boys on Sept. 20 won the prestigious De La Salle Nike Invitational at Newhall Park in Concord with a score of 115, edging Willow Glen-San Jose (120) and Granada (129).

Dublin senior Daniel Santhiapillai covered the hilly 3-mile course in 15 minutes, 28.4 seconds to finish fifth, while fellow senior Justin Feng (15:34.7) placed eighth. Granada senior Nicolai Barron was 11th (15:44.8).

Other Dublin runners to contribute to the title were junior Jeremy Imbo (16:00.8) and sophomores Shiva Prem (16:22.5) and Johnathan Lumm (16:22.8). Granada seniors Matthew Bertrand (15:58.6) and Neil Ajeesh (16:08.6) and sophomore Alex van Veen (16:09.7) all placed in the top 30.

Thirty-nine teams and 275 runners competed in the boys varsity race.

In girls varsity, Granada (331) placed ninth and Foothill (354) was 10th, well back of winner Archie Williams-San Rafael. Granada junior Sade Bumpus (18:09) placed fifth overall, less than a minute behind winner Farah Allen (17:18.8) of Branson-Ross. Sophomore Macy Mullins (19:06.6, 24th) was Foothill’s top finisher.

Also on Sept. 20, Amador Valley’s boys, led by senior Sattvik Raju, won the 22nd Farmer Invitational at Hayward High with 110 points, well ahead of Lynbrook-San Jose (141) and College Prep-Oakland (169).

Raju finished first over the 3-mile course in 15:06.65, outdistancing runner-up Kenji Kawabata (15:15.71) of Newark Memorial. Amador Valley senior Aiden Versteeg (15:42.75) was fourth, while senior Diego Laredo, freshman Ashwin Indrayan and sophomore Carlos Blanc-Alvarez all contributed to the title.

Amador Valley’s girls, behind the ninth-place overall finish of senior Kacie Wong (19:09.24), placed sixth (245), well back of winner Northgate-Walnut Creek (40).

Many of the top local teams are scheduled to run Sept. 27 in the ninth annual Scott Bauhs Invitational at Shadow Cliffs Regional Park in Pleasanton.

Flag football

Behind the red-hot hand of senior quarterback Katie Vail, plus sheer repetition, Granada entered the week on a

six-game winning streak. Vail is the NCS leader by a wide margin in passing yards (2,527) and touchdowns (30), while junior Isabelle Dunn (77 catches, 840 yards, 10 touchdowns) and senior Marin Lnenicka (54 catches, 814 yards, 14 touchdowns) lead the receiving corps.

The six wins included three shutouts, over Amador Valley (18-0), Deer Valley-Antioch (33-0) and Castro Valley (13-0). Lnenicka entered the week as not only the team leader in tackles (59) but also interceptions (five). Maile Nguyen led the team with six quarterback sacks.

“Our goal has just been to improve each game and be playing our best football leading into the playoffs,” Granada coach Jared Muela said. “The defense has been great, with the players really locking in their keys and reads that allow them to play faster. Offensively, we have gotten much better at situational football and making good decisions. We’ve had a little run of success but know just how good the EBAL (East Bay Athletic League) is.”

EBAL games scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 30 are Livermore at California-San Ramon, Amador Valley hosting Dougherty Valley-San Ramon, Dublin at Granada and Foothill at Monte Vista-Danville. All are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. starts.

Tackle football

Friday, Sept. 26 scheduled games at 7 p.m. are Freedom-Oakley (1-3) at Dublin (2-2) and Livermore (4-0) at Heritage-Brentwood (0-4). At 7:15 p.m., Las Lomas-Walnut Creek (4-0) is at Granada (2-2) and Foothill (3-1) is at Amador Valley (0-4).

Livermore remained unbeaten last week with a 40-13 home win over Arroyo-San Lorenzo as quarterback Matteo Lortie continued his remarkable senior season, going 19 of 27 for 290 yards and three touchdowns, along with 11 carries for 51 yards and two more scores. He opened the scoring with a 65-yard touchdown pass to CT Harper (eight catches, 135 yards) on the game’s first play from scrimmage. The Cowboys piled up 487 total yards. ... Skylar Stuart rushed 13 times for 181 yards and two touchdowns, and Cody Phillips added 74 yards and two more scores, leading Granada to a 28-13 win at Berkeley. ... Amaree Hills rushed for two touchdowns and the defense, led by Adam O’Brien (seven tackles) and Jayce Cardera (two sacks), did the rest, leading Foothill to a tough 14-7 win at previously unbeaten San Leandro. ... Andre Armendariz rushed for two more touchdowns, but that wasn’t nearly enough for Dublin in a 31-14 loss at undefeated Windsor. Four lost fumbles cost the Gaels, who allowed 307 total yards but managed just 146.

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

staff have used a lot the past 12 months. Last season, the Dons literally rode it all the way to a state title game at Long Beach Community College, where Amador Valley dropped a tough 18-14 decision to Frontier-Bakersfield.

Fungula is one of 14 returning starters, which led Jones to call this probably the most talented and promising team during his coaching tenure.

But the Dons were hit hard by the injury bug before the season even began.

Jones estimated that 12 players, including eight starters, have missed action throughout the season. Among those who have been sidelined are 2024 leading receivers Anthony Harrington (ankle) and Kade Robertson (season-ending torn knee ligament), leading rusher Ismael Duenas (dislocated elbow) and all-league tight end/defensive end McKay Kentizer (hamstring).

Kenitzer should be back against Foothill, and Duenas is hopeful to return sometime during East Bay Athletic League Mountain Division play.

“In all my years of coaching, I’ve never seen anything like it,” Jones said, referencing the injuries. “But we’re getting guys back. All our goals are still right in front of us: to beat Foothill, win league and see where they put us in NCS. I’m proud of our guys. They fight their butts off.”

down to two third-quarter, special-teams touchdowns by the home team. A scintillating 65-yard punt return by the game’s hero, Jaxon Bell (16 carries, 167 yards, three total touchdowns) and a fumble recovery in the end zone by Richie Beltram after a bad punt snap did in the Dons.

Amador Valley fought back gamely behind sophomore quarterback Nicco Kovacs (267 yards passing, two touchdowns), Harrington (11 catches, 172 yards, one touchdown),



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PLEASE HELP BRING MIGUEL HOME



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

Livermore Wente Winery worker, married father of three and grandfather

Miguel Lopez

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

To donate to a GoFundMe account supporting the Lopez family, visit <https://www.gofundme.com/f/bring-miguel-back-to-his-loved-ones>

LEGAL NOTICES/CLASSIFIEDS

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LEGAL NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617090

The following person(s) doing business as: Mitchell Katz Winery, 2915 S. Vasco Road, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jackson Cellars, Inc., 2915 S. Vasco Road, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/5/2002. Signature of Registrant/s/: Wesley R. Katz, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 21, 2025. Expires August 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6538. Published September 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617190

The following person(s) doing business as: Overtone, 11843 Bloomington Way, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Overtone Collective LLC, 11843 Bloomington Way, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 8/26/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Mathew Aaron Salit, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 26, 2025. Expires August 25, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6539. Published September 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 616364

The following person(s) doing business as: Golden State Fresh, 325 Franklin Street STE B, Oakland, CA 94607 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Golden State Fresh Inc., 325 Franklin Street STE B, Oakland, CA 94607. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/27/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Najib Awmalah, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on July 23, 2025. Expires July 22, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6540. Published September 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617141

The following person(s) doing business as: Best Carz Deal, 2216 American Ave, Hayward, CA 94545 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nguyen Nguyen, 2216 American Ave, Hayward, CA 94545. 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: 8/22/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Nguyen Song Nguyen, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 22, 2025. Expires August 21, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6541. Published September 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617237

The following person(s) doing business as: Driveza, 4047 1st ST, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Driveza LLC, 4047 1st ST, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 8/26/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Arulenthikumar Shanmugam, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 27, 2025. Expires August 26, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6542. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617253

The following person(s) doing business as: Cooker & Cooler, 21335 Cabot Blvd, Hayward, CA 94545 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Restaurantvan Inc., 21335 Cabot Blvd, Hayward, CA 94545. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 10/18/2022. Signature of Registrant/s/: Dongchen Geng, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of

Alameda on August 27, 2025. Expires August 26, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6543. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617358

The following person(s) doing business as: Sol Investigative Agency, 205 Puddingstone Rd, Alameda, CA 94502 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Natasha Lopez, 205 Puddingstone Rd, Alameda, CA 94502. 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/: Natasha Lopez, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 3, 2025. Expires September 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6544. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617182

The following person(s) doing business as: Leslie's Cookies and Treats, 870 Saturn Way, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Leslie Tregear, 870 Saturn Way, 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: 9/18/2023. Signature of Registrant/s/: Leslie Tregear, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 26, 2025. Expires August 25, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6545. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617245

The following person(s) doing business as: Montiel's Mechanical Solutions LLC, 189 N K ST, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Montiel's Mechanical Solutions LLC, 189 N K ST, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Brianca Miceri, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 27, 2025. Expires August 26, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6546. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617405

The following person(s) doing business as: Meza N. Moka, 1116 East Stanley Blvd, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nasnoor Enterprises LLC, 1116 East Stanley Blvd, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/3/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Abdelmounaim Fars, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 4, 2025. Expires September 3, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6547. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617377

The following person(s) doing business as: Moment.us Bay Area, 35111F Newark Blvd, Unit 2042, Newark, CA 94560 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Under Quiet Light,

35111F Newark Blvd, Unit 2042, Newark, CA 94560. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Charlene Granadosin, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 3, 2025. Expires September 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6548. Published September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 2025.

LEGAL NOTICE

Case No. 24AD00093

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO DETERMINE NON-EXISTENCE OF FATHER AND CHILD RELATIONSHIP PURSUANT TO FAMILY CODE SECTION 7630 To: **WARD ALLEN KECK** and to all persons claiming to be the father of Baby Girl Keller a.k.a. Nova Rae Edmonds a.k.a. Ocean Nova Cardenas born to Danielle Ciera Keller on May 24, 2024, in San Francisco, California. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner Micha Maya Cardenas has filed a Petition to Determine the Non-Existence of the Father and Child Relationship which has been set for a hearing at 8:30 a.m. on the 17th day of November, 2025 at the Courtroom of Department 125 of the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, located at 3341 Power Inn Road, Sacramento, California 95826. Should you claim to be the biological father of said child or that your consent to the adoption of said child is necessary, you should appear then and there to show cause, if any you have, why the Court should not declare the non-existence of the father and child relationship or why such child should not be adopted without your consent. The Independent, Legal No. 6549. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617357

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Ickmon Group; 2. Puzzywuzzi; 3. The Boba Hunter; 4. The Wonton Hunter; 5. N3me-sis.com; 6. Intuitive Percussion, 30701 Knight Court, Union City, CA 94587 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Richard Wong, 30701 Knight Court, Union City, CA 94587. 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: 10/1/2020. Signature of Registrant/s/: Richard Wong, Director. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 3, 2025. Expires September 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6550. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617003

The following person(s) doing business as: Valhalla Fitness Center, 271 Fennel Way, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): VFP Enterprise LLC, 271 Fennel Way, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 8/18/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Conner Stockett, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on August 19, 2025. Expires August 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6551. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617332

The following person(s) doing business as: Discover Landscaping, 15568 Tesla Rd, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Luis Ruiz, PO Box 2072, Livermore, CA 94551; Maria Ruiz, PO Box 2072, Livermore, CA 94551. 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: 9/1/1998. Signature of Registrant/s/: Maria Ruiz, Co-Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 2, 2025. Expires September 1, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6552. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617469

The following person(s) doing business as: KAP Agro Products, 636 Enterprise CT, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): KAP Organic Agro LLC, 636 Enterprise CT, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ajay Pahwa, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 9, 2025. Expires September 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6553. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617476

The following person(s) doing business as: Jwalkin, 3923 Pestana Way, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Janet Brandi, 3923 Pestana Way, 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: 9/4/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Janet Brandi. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 9, 2025. Expires September 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6554. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617483

The following person(s) doing business as: Ma Chiropractic, 4200 East Ave, Unit B, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Christopher Ma, 5239 Peacock Hill Drive, Castro Valley, CA 94552. 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/: Christopher Ma, Chiropractor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 9, 2025. Expires September 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6555. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 596851

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). Rodriguez Solutions, 5508 San Pablo Ave #5, Oakland, CA 94608. Registered by the following owner(s): Heather D. Rodriguez, 5508 San Pablo Ave, #5, Oakland, CA 94608. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 4/4/2023 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individu-

al. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Heather D. Rodriguez, Principal. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 3, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 6556. Published September 18, 25, October 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617630

The following person(s) doing business as: Steven Kent on 2nd, 209 McLeod Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Out From Land Investor Goup, LLC 2245 S. Vasco Rd, Ste C, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Steven Mirassou, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 16, 2025. Expires September 15, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6557. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617577

The following person(s) doing business as: Bashful Union, 133 Cascades Circle, Union City, CA 94587 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Thomas J. Clements 23 Railroad Ave, Wang, 133 Cascades Circle, Union City, CA 94587. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/2/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Linda Wang, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 12, 2025. Expires September 11, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6558. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617595

The following person(s) doing business as: My Kids Klub, 2458 Portola Ave, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Raiza Marciscano, 2458 Portola Ave, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/10/2022. Signature of Registrant/s/: Raiza Marciscano, Owner. This statement was

filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 15, 2025. Expires September 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6559. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617666

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Antigua LLC; 2. Berryclean, 473 3rd Street, Oakland, CA 94607 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Antigua LLC, 423 7th ST #912, Oakland, CA 94607. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 9/16/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Stanley Chen, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 16, 2025. Expires September 15, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6560. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617722

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Railroad Realtors; 2. Railroad Properties, 1048 Grant Ave, San Lorenzo, 94580 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Thomas J. Clements 23 Railroad Ave, #344, Ddanville, CA 94526. 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/: Thomas J. Clements, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 17, 2025. Expires September 16, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6561. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 617564

The following person(s) doing business as: Paper Artichoke, 830 Keystone Way, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Judy Tweten, 830 Keystone Way, 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Judy Teten, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on

September 11, 2025. Expires September 10, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6562. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 612820

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). Lumina Bodywork and Massage, 4187 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA 94607. Registered by the following owner(s): Helen Lee, 1415 Pullman Way, Oakland, CA 94607. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 2/28/2025 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individual. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Helen Lee, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on September 15, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 6563. Published September 25, October 2, 9, 16, 2025.

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Bankhead Production of Verdi’s Beloved ‘La Traviata’ Features a Special Behind-the-Scenes Collaboration

By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — “La Traviata,” one of Guiseppe Verdi’s more beloved and well-known operas, will be showing at the Bankhead Theater the next two weekends.

Widely considered one of the great warhorse operas for its timeless appeal and constant presence in the opera repertoire, this year’s production has brought together a special, behind-the-scenes collaboration between Matthew Antaky

Livermore Valley Opera for 25 years, pre-dating the company’s first show at the Bankhead in 2007.

Additionally, this is Antaky’s first time working with Candace Evans, the stage director for “La Traviata,” who has directed many operas at the Bankhead, three of which were with Revon.

“When I heard that Candace Evans was going to be the director, I was definitely thrilled because she’s an amazing director,” Revon said. “I was also excited

working directly with Evans on solidifying a concept for the set design.

“What’s cool is that the art-nouveau style that I designed, which was how I wanted to approach it — she loved the idea, so I was very fortunate because ultimately, even though designers have their own style, we’re here to support the director’s vision,” Revon said.

By the time Antaky began working on lighting, many of the pre-production considerations concerning budget, scenery and the

while others require just two singers. In terms of lighting, it means finding a way to sculpt the stage so as to manipulate the spectator’s focus, especially during scenes that require a more intimate feel.

“Every opera has different challenges,” Revon said. “With this one, we go from very intimate moments to suddenly the stage being brightly lit and full of people and dancing. This is one of those operas that bounces from extreme to extreme.”

As for designing the set, a particular difficulty this year has been the increased cost of materials, even while the budget has remained the same as last year.

According to Erie Mills, the artistic director of “La Traviata,” of the \$200,000-\$250,000 budget that typically goes into producing an opera at the Bankhead, about \$30,000-\$50,000 is allocated toward the set.

“Suddenly, I was being told that I needed to design a really beautiful set, but with way less budget,” Revon said. “The budget was the same as last year, but the general prices for everything have gone up.” One of the solutions was to create two portals, one that would bring the set forward to the audience, and then, a second art-nouveau-styled one farther back that would make the stage appear smaller.

Lastly, with the large projector in the far back, Revon said that all three of these layers combined, in contributing to the illusion of either enlarging or shrinking the set, would minimize the amount of actual scenery necessary.

Both Revon and Antaky added that despite all the challenges they encountered behind the scenes,

the process of bringing “La Traviata” to life and getting to work alongside such talented artists and singers was amazing.

“I love working with Matthew because I know that when I work with him, he’s going to embellish the set — his lighting won’t only complement and heighten its beauty, but also, be a design in its own right,” Revon said.

To learn more about this fall’s production of “La Traviata,” and see the final

product in person, tickets are available at: <https://livermorearts.org/events/lvo-verdis-la-traviata/>.



Longtime Livermore Valley Opera set and technical director Jean-Francois Revon, left, and lighting director Matthew Antaky are working together to bring “La Traviata” to life at Livermore’s Bankhead Theater. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

and Jean-Francois Revon.

“I was most excited to work with Jean-Francois’ designs,” said Antaky, the lighting director for the production. “They’re very open, stylized and particular, so that made my job a lot more fun, but also because of the nature of the opera itself, being a classic boy-meets-girl love story, the whole thing can be over the top.”

This marks Antaky’s second opera at the Bankhead, and first time collaborating with Revon, who’s been the resident set and technical director for

when she liked the idea of art-nouveau because I really love that style, and also musically, this opera has some of the most gorgeous music and arias that you hear in opera.”

Revon’s concept for designing the set of “La Traviata” was to give it an elegant, art-nouveau style with lots of space and sweeping curves to accentuate the romantic elements of the story, and highlight the seductive side of its heroine, Violetta.

His work began approximately a year ago, and three months in, Revon started

amount of space being used were already straightened out. However, that still didn’t eliminate the shortage of time they were both given inside the theater — just five days.

“One challenge is that we’re always pushed for time,” Antaky said. “We always have to make sure that what we design is feasible to execute within the time that we have, with the amount of crew that we have.”

Another difficulty is that “La Traviata” is known for its extreme range of scenes, some of which call for large group choruses,

Movie Portraying Veterans’ Experiences Set for Livermore

‘Brothers After War’ Chronicles Transition from Active-War Fighter to Civilian Life, and the Challenges That Go With It

By Ruth Roberts

LIVERMORE — A special screening of the Gary Sinise Foundation’s “Brothers After War” will be held from noon-4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 27 at the downtown Livermore 13 Cinema.

The event, free to attendees, will include a post-screening luncheon and seminar, where veterans and their families can share their experiences.

Directed by veteran Jake Rademacher and executive produced by actor, director and producer Sinise, the film was released in theaters in February and follows Rademacher as he reconnects with his brothers-in-arms and the elite soldiers and Marines he served with during the Iraq War.

The movie, from Metanoia Films and Perseverance Productions, intertwines past and present footage of these soldiers as they transition from active-war fighters to veterans. Rademacher said that the documentary captures moments of humor alongside the struggles many veterans face, including loss, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression. The film, Rademacher believes, ultimately delivers a message of meaning, connection and hope.

“Brothers After War” is the sequel to the award-winning 2009 documentary “Brothers at War.” In an interview with The Independent, Rademacher, who served in Iraq in 2005 and 2006, discussed the challenges veterans faced during the Vietnam era and earlier, when there were few outlets

or support groups available to help them process their experiences and transition to civilian life. With this film, Rademacher aims to facilitate the reintegration process for veterans and their families.

And he has had so much success that he and his team have been able to work with more than 60,000 veterans since embarking on the



The movie poster for “Brothers After War,” which will be screened free of charge Saturday, Sept. 27 at the Livermore 13 Cinema. (Photo courtesy of Metanoia Films)

film tours in 2011, first with “Brothers at War” and now with “Brothers After War.”

“Making this latest film, we sort of knew and hoped that the response would be impactful, but it has really exceeded even my expectations, and I think I became a better brother to my brothers from what I learned from them,” Rademacher said. “The film has a lot of humor in it. It does touch on tougher subjects, but the reality is that most veterans find it a

bit cathartic.”

One veteran who saw the film concisely expressed how it benefited him.

“The film helped me realize that I’m not alone,” he said. “It gives me hope for the future.”

Rademacher said that working with award-winning actor Sinise, who is not a veteran but has family members who are, was an unforgettable experience.

“Gary is amazing,” Rademacher said. “We met in 2007 when he saw my first film and started showing me ways to improve the next one. With this film, he was very much involved. He was a true executive director and mentor, and provided lots of great feedback.”

Following the film, attendees will have the opportunity to talk about their personal experiences and how they relate to those in the film. Rademacher said there will be a session where microphones will be passed around the room for people to share their thoughts and experiences if they wish.

“During the course of the seminar, veterans and their families will have the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe place if they want and to know they will be met with understanding,” Rademacher said. “But always we end on a positive note ... I hope that when they walk out of the room, they may have a new perspective or thought or technique for coping that they didn’t have before, and feel good about it.”

To view the trailer, visit <https://youtu.be/zdNwY-J4S6Ag>. To register for the event, visit baw.mov/92725.

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