



Holiday carolers strolled through downtown Livermore on Saturday, Dec. 21. The Mistletoe Carolers are members of the Areté Singers, a choral group performing throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Government to Pay \$116M Settlement to 103 Abused Women Inmates of FCI Dublin

Settlement Averages \$1.1 Million for Each Inmate; More Lawsuits Pending

By Larry Altman

REGIONAL — The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) will pay \$116 million to 103 women subjected to sexual abuse and rape by guards and other personnel while formerly incarcerated at the FCI Dublin prison.

This settlement wraps up more than 100 individual lawsuits, although there are an unknown number of cases still pending against the bureau. In addition, a class-action lawsuit was recently settled on behalf of inmates in FCI Dublin.

The payment to settle the

civil lawsuits by the women against the U.S. Government was announced last week by the Pride Law Firm in San Diego, which represented the women and called the settlement the largest of its kind in U.S. history.

“This historic settlement sends a powerful message,” attorney Jessica Pride said in a statement. “Systematic abuse of prisoners will not be tolerated. What happened at Dublin was not just a failure of oversight. It was a cultural rot, where sexual abuse became entrenched as part of the prison’s operations.

This settlement represents justice for 103 brave women who refused to remain silent and (fought) to ensure their voices were heard.”

The agreement to settle the cases occurred about a week after FBOP officials announced that the prison will remain permanently shut down. The prison had been closed since April, when the 605 inmates were relocated to other facilities across the country.

The settlement with the inmates also follows a proposed settlement of the class-action lawsuit filed by the Califor-

(See FCI DUBLIN, page 11)

Pleasanton City Council May Speed Up Budget Process with Ad Hoc Committee

But Two Members Raise Concerns About Excluding Part of the Council

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The new city council grappled last week with exactly how to kickstart the city’s biennial budget development process. It tabled a proposed 11-member Budget Advisory Committee and planned to also explore a two-member Ad Hoc City Council Committee next month. The coming budget process will attempt to balance a city budget facing an annual deficit of at least \$13 million, as projected by city staff.

The council voted 3-2, with Councilmembers Julie Testa and Jeff Nibert opposed, to direct the staff to craft a plan for the Ad Hoc City Council Committee that could help guide the budget process more quickly than the full council would.

Both Testa and Nibert said the larger Budget Advisory Committee was needed because it would involve public input.

The staff will also present a “budget 101” primer for the entire budget process at the next city council meeting on Jan. 9, 2025. Pleasanton’s next biennial budget is scheduled to be adopted next June.

“(The Ad Hoc Committee) should move to build trust in the forecast by challenging the models and assumptions to some level of granularity that we can gain confidence in,” said newly sworn-in Mayor Jack Balch, who proposed the Ad Hoc Committee.

Along with Balch, the city also swore in Councilmembers Craig Eicher and Matt Gaidos at the meeting. Balch appointed Councilmem-

ber Jeff Nibert as Pleasanton’s new vice mayor.

The city staff originally proposed a budget engagement plan along with the Budget Advisory Committee that included a town hall meeting, two pop-up events, an online engagement tool and surveys. The Advisory Committee would have consisted of one representative appointed by each councilmember, plus a representative each from the Pleasanton Police Officers’ Association, the Pleasanton City Employees Association, the International Association of Firefighters and the Management/Confidential Employee Unit. The city manager would have also appointed two at-large members, bringing the membership to a total of 11.

While the Advisory Committee

(See BUDGET, page 9)

Livermore

Change in Airport Oversight Promises Economic Progress

Long-Term Plans Include Hydrogen Refueling Station for Buses, Trains and Possibly Aircraft

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — In a move to enhance Livermore Municipal Airport’s potential as an economic engine, the City of Livermore has transitioned oversight of the airport from its Public Works Department to its Innovation & Economic Development Department (IEDD).

“The realignment builds on the city’s airport-development policy that balances an important role of the airport in the city’s economic development with community concerns over aircraft noise and leaded fuel,” said IEDD Director Brandon

Cardwell. “The assessment of the economic development at the airport, including a comprehensive stakeholder outreach process, has been led by the IEDD, and it was only natural to transition the oversight of the airport to that department to continue balancing its economic development potential with community needs and concerns.”

Pete Sandhu, owner of the airport’s sole service provider Five Rivers Aviation, said he “wholeheartedly” supports the transition, adding, “I enjoy interacting with Brandon Cardwell and believe that he is the

(See AIRPORT, page 5)



The undefeated Granada girls soccer team hosted Livermore on Wednesday Dec. 18, where the Cowboys fought the Matadors to a 0-0 tie. See story on page 10. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Dublin Unified School District

New Trustee Chosen, But Board Split over Technicality

Carolina Martinez Sworn in for Seat Left Vacant; Two Trustees Claim Process Violated Ed Code

By Ruth Roberts

DUBLIN — The Dublin Unified School District (DUSD) Board of Trustees, in a 3-2 vote, has appointed Carolina Martinez, an IT quality assurance manager at San Francisco State University, to fill the district’s Area 3 trustee seat.

But the provisional appointment, made during a contentious meeting on Dec. 17, may not hold up. Trustees Dan Cherrier and Gaby Blackman, who voted against the appointment, said the board violated

several parts of the California education code and declined to participate in the interview process, although both were present at the meeting.

“I took an oath to uphold the Constitution of California, and all the codes contained within and as far as I am concerned, we have not followed that process,” said Cherrier.

Martinez’s appointment comes after the sole candidate for the open board seat, Jeff Clark, dropped out of the race just days before the Nov. 5 election. Clark was to replace Board Vice President William Kuo,

(See SCHOOL BOARD, page 7)



Dan Bergmann and Julie Wente study a play in a round of duplicate bridge. The Livermore Bridge Club, of which Bergmann is the partnership chair, has been meeting for 30 years. The club meets every Monday at Odd Fellows Hall in Livermore. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Taking Tricks and Keeping Social Bonds

Long-Running Livermore Bridge Club Maintains the Art of Playing Games

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE — For a card game notorious for its rounds called “tricks,” in bridge there are actually no secrets at all. That’s according to Dan Bergmann, the Livermore Bridge Club’s partnership and communication chair.

Players are armed with a long list of bidding “conventions” provided by the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) that seem akin to a written

version of catcher signals in baseball. The ACBL is a non-profit organization that governs the game of bridge in North America.

Those conventions include bids to take a certain number of tricks, as is the case in many trick-taking card games, such as hearts, pinochle or euchre. But in bridge, the conventions also include artificial bids intended to express certain information to the bidder’s partner. That’s because partners have to try to

win each round without knowing what cards they’re holding or speaking with each other.

And players like Bergmann, a retired physicist from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory who has been playing bridge since he was a kid, like to come up with new conventions to keep the game challenging.

“Everybody has one of these things.” He held up a plastic card filled with printed text. “So if you use some fancy bidding convention where a

(See BRIDGE, page 7)

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PET OF THE WEEK



CINDY LOU WHO

For you Whos down in Whoville that love dogs a lot, sweet Cindy Lou Who is the best we have got. Oh, the cuddles she gives, they’re pure magic, you’ll find. Her tail wags in rhythm with her big heart so kind. She bounds forth with a wag while walking about, but when playtime is done, in your lap she’ll pass out. At Valley Humane you’ll meet Cindy Lou Who — adopt her today and find joy anew. Apply online today at valleyhumane.org, or visit her at Valley Humane Society’s pet adoption center, located at 3670 Nevada Street in Pleasanton. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

Event Center Could Bring \$75M-\$100M to Region

By Ruth Roberts

Visit Tri-Valley (VTV), the marketing group that recently announced Dublin as its choice for developing a proposed 5,000-seat state-of-the-art event center, thanked the city council for supporting the ambitious project during a presentation to the council on Dec. 17.

“I want to thank you and I want to thank our board of directors for their steadfastness, and to the City of Dublin for being so willing and able to be partners with us in

pursuit of this major legacy for the Tri-Valley,” said Tracy Farhad, VTV’s CEO.

According to Farhad, the proposed facility, which is planned for the corner of Martinelli Way and Arnold Road next to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, could generate from \$75 million to \$100 million annually for the region.

The event center is a collaborative effort between the City of Dublin, VTV and Alameda County, which owns the parcel earmarked for the project.

“Thank you to Visit Tri-Valley. I’m so thrilled to hear the news,” said Mayor Sherry Hu. “It will bring visitors and business and high-quality activities to our residents, and I’m thrilled.”

Hu was sworn in as mayor earlier in the meeting, as well as Councilmember John Morada. Councilmember Kashaf Qadri was appointed vice mayor.

VTV announced plans last September to build the 100,000-square-foot facility to showcase the region as a destination location. According to VTV, the multi-use venue will host high-profile sports tournaments, entertainment events, corporate gatherings, and retail and community-gathering opportunities.

“I’m thrilled. We’ve wanted to have a venue to be able to do youth tournaments and professional sports events and concerts,” said Councilmember Jean Josey. “The region as a whole is going to be able to benefit tremendously ... I couldn’t be prouder you have selected Dublin.”

Supporters of the event center spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting, including County Supervisor David Haubert, a longtime proponent of the plan.

“I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to Tracy (Farhad) for all the hard work she has put into this,” said Haubert. “I’m so thrilled for you, and us — I’m a Dublin resident — that we are going to make the Emerald City the Crown Jewel of the Tri-Valley.”

Former Dublin Mayor Tim Sbranti praised VTV for its vision and the council for its enthusiasm.

“I’m just really excited to see this move forward and even more excited

to see the mayor’s and council’s support,” said Sbranti. “Obviously, there is a lot of work ahead, but I think everyone realizes the potential benefits to not only the city, but the region as a whole.”

Farhad said the next steps include creating a memorandum of understanding with the City of Dublin, ongoing collaboration with Alameda County and working on Phase 3 of the project. Phase 3, Fahad added, will include the creation of a financing package, traffic and environmental plans and agreements on management and operations.

“And with the stars in alignment, projected groundbreaking in 2027,”

Farhad added. “It’s enthusiastic, but I think we can do it.”

For more information, visit www.trivalley.com.



The Holly Jolly Trolley offers free rides through downtown Livermore every day through Jan. 5 except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. The trolley runs 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Vineyard 2.0 Marks One-Year Anniversary of Providing Housing Support and Respect

By Ruth Roberts

In 2023, due to a series of unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances, LuAnn Briggs found herself living out of her car in Livermore. Believing she could overcome her situation, the 70-year-old tried to remain positive and proactive, but when she fell ill, despair overcame her.

“Hopelessness hit me very rapidly and very hard,” said Briggs.

Various area organizations donated 30 days in a local hotel while Briggs recovered and healed. The hotel stay was followed by a month at Sojourner House in Livermore, a temporary shelter for those in need of housing. But it wasn’t until Briggs heard about the newly opened Vineyard 2.0 facility in Livermore that her life changed forever.

“My journey to living here has been nothing short of a series of miracles, as they (Vineyard 2.0) literally saved my life,” said Briggs. “Living at Vineyard is a dream come true.”

Opened in January 2024 and celebrating its one-year anniversary, Vineyard 2.0 is a temporary and long-term housing facility equipped with a produc-

tion kitchen and dining facility. It doubles each evening as an overnight shelter with 30 beds for the displaced and unhoused.

Briggs has her own studio in Vineyard 2.0, one of 23 such units on the campus, and although her apartment has a kitchen, Briggs also has access to laundry facilities, and the dining room and kitchen, which are run by Open Heart Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that provides meals to those in need through several avenues, including a new food bank.

The one-of-a-kind facility is a partnership between Open Heart Kitchen, the Housing Consortium of the East Bay, and the cities of Livermore, Dublin and Pleasanton. The project, whose residents range in age from 18-75, is a testament to hope and the power of collaboration.

“Vineyard was a response to needs already here,” said John Bost, executive director of Open Heart Kitchen. “This project came in response to a need, and I wish we had a Vineyard in every town.”

The stories and circumstances of those who come to Vineyard are varied and complex, but all, said Bost, are looking for the same thing: a warm bed and a

friendly face.

“More than anything, people just want someone to listen to them,” said Bost. “It’s a real chicken and egg problem. People for all kinds of reasons need assistance and if we can keep people housed and fed while they are trying to figure out the rest, then we have success. The minute someone loses their housing ... it’s tough to come back from that.”

There has been an increased need for shelter with the arrival of winter, Bost said, and with a sweep of homeless encampments on CalTrans property in Livermore on Dec. 12, the number of those needing a bed has also grown.

“The goal is for us to reach 40 (shelter) beds ultimately,” said Bost. “We’re working on it.”

Briggs, meanwhile, is hoping at some point to be able to move out and make room for another resident in need.

“Vineyard 2.0 and the people who make it possible, saved my life,” said Briggs. “2.0 provides hope and a real chance to regain respect and live a wonderful quality of life. While it is permanent housing, my goal is to move ahead, so that someone else in need may have a chance to live

a better life, and Vineyard is just the place to do it. I am proud to live here and have this wonderful opportunity.”

For more information, visit <https://www.open-heartkitchen.org/vineyard>.

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EDITORIAL

A Bureaucratic Switch Could Transform the Livermore Airport

When government acts — enacting new laws, for example, or shifting resources around — it can often appear that it is acting as a single unit. The reality is that governments are a combination of different entities. The people at the top may issue direction, but it’s up to the various departments to carry them out.

Sometimes those actions don’t achieve the intended results, and a course change is necessary.

Such a course change may be happening at the Livermore Municipal Airport with the announcement last week that oversight of the facility was being transferred from the city’s Public Works Department to its Innovation and Economic Development Department.

This is an important decision. The airport isn’t a static piece of infrastructure like a highway. It’s an engine of economic power that can serve as the hub of commercial activity in Livermore. And that economic impact can be felt across the region.

Five Rivers Aviation, the fixed

base operator of the airport, has been offering plans to turn the airport into that hub, but the city has not been able to move forward for a year and a half. The city lifted a development moratorium at the airport in July 2023, but then authorized a comprehensive land use study to weigh opportunities, putting many development plans on hold.

Among Five Rivers’ top priorities is maintaining a partnership with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), which is now providing critical helicopter services to the Tri-Valley. The district moved its two helicopters and five pilots — each a sworn police officer — to Livermore earlier this year, and already has offered critical rescue operations, fire suppression and police work.

EBRPD has only secured a temporary lease but needs a permanent larger space so it can upgrade its fleet — its current helicopters are too small to carry a hospital gurney. The district would prefer to remain in Livermore, but it needs to secure

a longer-term lease for more hangar space to accommodate its plans. The worry is that the district would move to a different airport outside the Tri-Valley if it can’t obtain what it needs here.

The addition of a full-service air ambulance would be a major improvement for the Tri-Valley, which already has slow emergency response times. Furthermore, the nearest trauma center is located in Castro Valley. We also live in an area of increased fire danger, and the closest CalFire fire-fighting planes are in Hollister. Moreover, it’s a benefit to have police in the air to supplement the work of officers on the ground.

There are other projects afoot. There’s a lot of buzz about plans to use hydrogen power in buses, the Valley Link train and even aviation. But that requires building out the storage facilities to supply it. Aviation startups need space to develop technology for a carbon-free future, and even provide air taxi service, as Archer Aviation has said it intends to do sometime in 2025. The San Jose

company has raised \$660 million in venture capital this year, for a total of more than \$2 billion, to develop electric-powered vertical takeoff-and-landing aircraft.

In addition, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has been working with local startup Verne Inc. to develop hydrogen storage systems that can be installed at or close to the airport.

If Livermore is going to lean hard into becoming an “innovation economy,” updating its general plan to do so, and turning the airport into the engine of that economy will be important first steps.

Government often works slowly, cautiously, inching forward while trying to keep everything together. But sometimes it makes a leap forward, to everyone’s benefit. Livermore may have just done this by placing the airport under the authority of a city department focused on growth and innovation instead of one focused on maintenance. This move could well kick Livermore’s airport into high gear.

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 (newsroom@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.*

Eight Nights of Hanukkah
Patricia Munro, Livermore

This is a rare year when Christmas and Hanukkah fall on the same day. With that in mind, here are eight facts about Hanukkah, one

for each night. (No shade to Christmas, but it’s not mine to explain. For those who celebrate — here’s hoping it was merry and bright.)

1. Jewish days begin at sundown, so the first Hanukkah candle was lit at sundown on Dec. 25. And today is the first day of the holiday.

2. Hanukkah is the story of Jews, led by the Maccabees, fighting against the Hellenistic Seleucids, who forbade Jewish practice and profaned the Temple in Jerusalem, and for religious freedom.

3. Hanukkah is also the story of internal conflict, as different Jewish groups fought about the nature of Jewish practice — a common theme everywhere and everywhen.

4. And Hanukkah is the story of the miracle of oil burning for eight days when it should have lasted only one, thereby keeping the Temple’s eternal flame alight until more oil had been obtained.

5. The story of the Maccabees cannot be found in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), written only in Hebrew and Aramaic. Maccabees I-IV were written in Greek and can be found in the Apocrypha of Catholic Bibles.

6. Hanukkah candles mark eight days of light. They are placed in a nine-branched candelabra called a hanukkiyah. One candle, the shamash, lights the others every night. Candles are added from the right each of the eight nights, then lit from left to right.

7. The four-sided dreidel has a Hebrew letter on each side: nun (n), gimel (g), hay (h), and shin (sh). These stand for “Nes Gadol Haya Sham,” meaning “a great miracle happened there.” In Israel, the shin (standing for sham, “there”) is replaced with peh (p), (standing for po, “here”).

8. Early in the Common Era, the schools of two early rabbis — Hillel and Sham-

mai — debated whether the number of candles should decrease or increase each night. Shammai took the literal approach of counting down. Hillel took the spiritual approach, that light and holiness should always increase. Their fellow rabbis deemed both arguments valid, but found Hillel’s argument of light more compelling.

At this season, may your holidays be filled with increasing light and the miracles that surround us every day. And may the coming year be filled with health, happiness, and hope.

Mind Reader or Fake?
Jeff Kaskey, Livermore

So Mr. Jonas (Mailbox, December 19) believes that the recent election “offers the ultimate attestation of which candidate’s Eden Housing message resonated more sympathetically with D4 voters.” He believes the City Council votes had nothing to do with voter opinions on endorsements, issues, campaigning, experience, name recognition, timing, mailers, negative ads or anything else. No, he says it was all about the candidates’ positions on Eden Housing. It is an interesting conclusion, because next to District 4, in District 3, a large majority of voters selected candidates opposing the current Eden Housing plan. Fortunately for the winning candidate, there were two candidates who opposed the current Eden plan, and that majority of voters split neatly between them. That noise you hear is Jonas back-peddling furiously, unless he is willing to declare that District 3 voted decisively against the current Eden housing plan.

No Mr. Jonas, elections are about a number of issues and voters make their choices for many different reasons. As one of the two D3 candidates opposed to the current Eden plan, I spoke with over 1000 voters. They talked about preserving Livermore’s character, public safety, the urban growth boundary, homelessness, and a number of other things. Sometimes it included Eden, and like District 4 candidate Mr. Soules, I found that of the voters who discussed it at all, a significant majority were opposed to the current plan, often vol-

unteering that information without being asked. Not being a mind-reader, I can’t say how voters weighed each influence to vote the way they did, but apparently Mr. Jonas thinks he has that skill. Either he’s a mass mind reader or he’s making things up. I know which way I’d vote on that.

Learning Disorders – Addiction – Incarceration
Deborah McQueen, Livermore

Recent press regarding prison violations due to neglect or inappropriate behavior by staff and guards highlight the need for comprehensive change within prisons. While well-meaning, these articles almost always miss the deeper problems that plague prisons. Chief among those problems are the underlying causes of incarceration. The leading cause of imprisonment in the United States is drug-related crimes, and not surprisingly, drugs are the leading cause of recidivism. However, it’s not the substance abuse that causes incarceration, but the crime committed by the individual with a substance use disorder (SUD) to acquire the drugs for their habit, which inevitably results in their imprisonment. These crimes can be formidable and include child trafficking, armed robbery, identity theft, prostitution rings, murder for hire, and the transport and sale of weapons across state lines.

People often mistake low-to moderate-security prison inmates for trifling or insignificant crimes. However, this is not the case. Low to moderate-security prisons can house individuals whose crimes were deemed by law to merit a sentence of life without parole. Inmates are housed in facilities based on evaluating whether they pose a low, medium, or high threat level to the guards or society, not on the significance of the crime committed or the length of their sentence. Generally speaking, facilities that house female inmates are low to medium-security facilities because female inmates tend to less prone to violent behavior. Female inmates with life sentences for murder may be housed in the same facility as inmates sentenced for non-violent white-collar crimes. The latter makes up a

small percentage of the overall prison population.

Recent genomic studies on learning disorders (LDs) and addiction have noted a genetic link between ADHD and substance abuse. Additionally, studies have revealed a genetic link between dyslexia and ADHD. Children born with dyslexia, ADHD, or spectrum disorder may have a higher probability of engaging in substance abuse in their later years. SUD is a leading contributor to criminal behavior and often leads to incarceration. Furthermore, LDs are disproportionately high within prisons. Public schools seem to miss the opportunity to fully address learning disorders effectively. Thus, children unable to excel in school drop out and become targets for gang indoctrination. Schools need early screening and remediation tools to detect children with LDs. Early interventions for children with learning disorders may reduce future crime while saving lives and money.

The Election
Thomas Soules, Livermore

A couple letters in last week’s Independent suggested that Kristie Wang won because she supported the City’s downtown plan. However, Kristie did not say one way or another how she felt about the City Plan during the campaign. Yes, I was disappointed when after the election she immediately said that she had heard a lot of interest in moving the City Plan forward. I was perhaps naively hoping that since Kristie had expressed similar views to mine near the end of the campaign that she would keep an open mind to changing the City Plan. In my opinion the City Plan in its current form does not offer a beautiful downtown for all to enjoy, open space and maintaining some of the character of a small town. Yes, it is also true that as our team and I went door-to-door across the entire District 4, we found a great deal of enthusiasm for not having any more big buildings or the concomitant congestion downtown. I do not know why I lost the election and Kristie won, but Kristie won fair and square. I wish her and the City of Livermore good luck.

Gratitude from SPARC Theater Staff and Board of Directors
Audrey Brooks, Livermore

We at SPARC Theater wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the extraordinary volunteer service provided by members of the National Charity League, Livermore and Pleasanton Chapters, in 2024. We especially rely on NCL support at the Shakespeare in the Vineyards show at Darcie Kent Vineyards in Livermore, and our new program at Danville’s Village Theatre.

We’d like to highlight the dedication to nurturing community spirit through acts of service that NCL provides, profoundly impacting SPARC Theater programs. It’s been a joy to witness such enthusiasm and commitment, and to see firsthand the difference it makes when a community comes together to support the arts.

NCL members’ willingness to step in with tasks big and small, from working ArtWalk booths to ushering performances, has been instrumental in our success. These efforts have not only helped us run smoothly but enhanced the experience of every patron who walks through our doors.

As we reflect on this past year, we are especially grateful for the partnership with the National Charity League. These volunteers embody the true spirit of community and generosity. We are fortunate to have such passionate individuals by our side and look forward to what we can continue to achieve together.

Thank you to NCL for their support, commitment, and enthusiasm for nearly a decade. We are eagerly anticipating another wonderful year of partnership in 2025.

Kristie Wang vs. Tom Soules
Richard Ryon, Livermore

The Independent newspaper has recently published Letters to the Editor stating that Kristie Wang received more votes than Tom Soules for the District 4 council seat because of her support for retaining the Eden low-cost housing development in the heart of the city, rather than on a nearby site – north of Railroad Avenue, for instance.

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

THE Independent

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www.independentnews.com



The Livermore Police Department held its annual Shop with a Cop event on Dec. 14, helping 43 children in need shop for themselves and their families. The event included kids receiving treats at Starbucks on Portola, shopping at Walmart, gift wrapping and breakfast at Junction Avenue School. Granada High's marching band and the leadership teams from both Livermore High and Granada High participated, and this year the Livermore Police Explorers joined in. (Photo courtesy of Livermore Police Department)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

First, a tribute to The Independent editorial staff. They believe the role of a news organization is to allow the public to speak through letters to the editor, whether or not the opinions expressed agree or not with their viewpoint. That is what happened here. Readers know that The Independent endorsed Tom Soules for city council, yet they allowed the letters to be published, without comment. It is because of this openness that I always read the letters. Agree or not, it is good to know what others in our community think.

Second, I believe the claims made regarding Ms. Wang's win to be incorrect, as I do not recall her saying

anything during the campaign about keeping the location of the Eden housing project in the center of the downtown, the city's current plan.

It seems to me she won because of her service on the school board. It was partly name recognition, and partly her support of school issues that people agree with. Soules had no name recognition. His service to the community was through the Heritage Guild; a fine service, but not destined to make him known to residents. If anything, his significant number of votes was due to his support of issues before the community – an alternative location for the proposed downtown housing so that the city's core could be retained

as open space, in addition to his opposition to altering the Urban Growth Boundary east of Greenville Road.

I hope Kristie Wang serves as an independent decision-maker on the city council, and represents the will of the people of Livermore.

What Has Happened to America?
David Marco, Livermore

I grew up in the 50's and 60's in Pennsylvania outside of Pittsburgh. There were prosperous small towns with industries ranging from farming to steel mills. Work brought me to California in the late 70's. As I look back on Pennsylvania, I've wondered what happened? The small industries are mostly gone. The once prosperous small towns with well-run independent shops are not doing well, and the many stores are replaced by Dollar Stores and others with cheap imported goods. As I watched over the years, I wondered why Bush Sr. gave China "favored nation" status at a time when they were persecuting their people? Clinton and others continued to send our jobs out of the country. I thought it must be just that labor is cheaper over there.

Recently, I've realized that the gutting of the economy of many states has been something that has been facilitated and probably planned by our politicians. Like me, the last election showed that most Americans are waking up to the fact that our politicians have literally sold out America. Politicians from both parties with deep ties to China and other nations are not our friends. They personally grow super rich while the people they are supposed to represent suffer. The gutting of so many communities has been planned. It's no accident. Evidence is all around us while politicians and professors try to convince us that what we are seeing with our own eyes is not true. That is propaganda.

But we are waking up and

reformers are on the rise. MAGA is foremost a reformation for America. It's about America and every nation becoming their absolute best, which means the best opportunities for all our legal citizens.

This is a new day for America. The people have spoken, and we want reformation, and it cannot be stopped. It is "an idea whose time has come."

America's best days are ahead!

The Cost of Our Utilities
Owen Brovont, Livermore

Coming home from the grocery store this afternoon, listening to the news on the KSFO radio station, a major item was that the CPUC – for those of you who are tired and suspicious of government organizations hiding behind abbreviated titles – the California Public Utilities Commission – announced another rate hike, but is attempting to soften the message by telling we rate payers that it will not take effect until 2026! Well, coincidentally, earlier in the day, I had become curious about the rate changes because I received notification of my next PG&E bill due on January 8th. I decided to do some research because I was somewhat nonplussed by the size of my bill. I built a spreadsheet to cover the last six years, from 2019 through the end of 2024. Over those last six years, PG&E has averaged a rate increase of 12.34% each and every year – probably much faster than your income! The cumulative change in our cost has been a little over 100 percent; that is to say that our cost for PG&E has more than doubled in six years and they want to increase it again! It is natural to ask, "Why is it so high now and how are they justifying raising it again?" On what does PG&E spend its income?

The Commissioners must consider themselves politically untouchable and therefore can disregard the public's opinion. I suggest that

simple, unadorned outrage is an appropriate response for such arrogance and suggest two tactics — terminate the commissioners' employment and reduce the rates to something that is keyed to the actual cost of providing utilities, and remove the accumulated warts that have been grown on the rate schedule that have nothing to do with providing utilities. If you are satisfied with the current situation, you need do nothing; however, if you are not satisfied with how PG&E manages the utility cost recovery system, let your voice be heard. For energizing information, the combined annual salaries of the five CPUC commissioners exceeds \$1,150,000 – plus benefits. Initial information can be found at: www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/commiss

sioners. It will take much more digging beyond this website to discover what the total compensation of each member of the CPUC is, in salary and benefits, as the state doesn't make it easy to ferret it out. Questions to ponder are why is PG&E service so expensive and why is it getting more expensive at such a rate?

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AIRPORT

(Continued from front page)

smartest city employee ever to oversee the airport."

Last summer, Sandhu submitted a development proposal that would combine airport-generated solar power with effluent from the nearby wastewater treatment plant to create green hydrogen to fuel aircraft and other heavy-duty applications, such as the upcoming Valley Link rail line adjacent to the airport. The proposal would also develop airport land for partnerships with Las Positas College, CalFire and other clean-aviation businesses.

Valley Link, the planned rail project between Dublin and the San Joaquin Valley, plans to offer zero-emission service through the use of hydrogen trains. Construction may start on the initial 22-mile segment between Dublin and Mountain House as early as 2025.

While supportive of the airport's involvement with such projects, Cardwell said that the Federal Aviation Administration re-

quires the city to prioritize aeronautical uses, such as additional hangars, at the airport.

"We are excited to partner with companies exploring new aviation technologies," said Cardwell. "We are also in communications with the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) on their efforts to build a hydrogen fueling station and any potential for future hydrogen generation at or near the airport." He added that the city is continuing its feasibility assessment of the other proposed uses.

The LAVTA Wheels bus system has shared plans to transition its use of diesel-hybrid vehicles to a 68-bus fleet powered by hydrogen by 2034.

The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory has also lent its expertise to the area's budding hydrogen economy through a joint project with hydrogen startup Verne Inc. that demonstrated the feasibility of a cryo-compressed hydrogen storage system.

"This is precisely why

the oversight of the airport has transitioned to the Innovation and Economic Development Department," said Cardwell. "With direct access to a network of established connections in the tech industry with an eye on innovation, the department will be able to expose and connect the airport to these potential partnership opportunities."

Regarding noise and emissions concerns, Cardwell pointed to the airport's new noise-monitoring system, enhanced pilot outreach about noise-reduction procedures, and its recent addition of unleaded aviation gasoline. The airport started offering Swift UL94 fuel in July, which is usable by about two-thirds of U.S. piston-engine aircraft. Hydrogen-fueled planes, when they are developed, wouldn't use carbon-based fuels at all.

"The airport will continue to prioritize addressing community concerns as part of a balanced approach to airport management," Cardwell said.

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THE Independent

Public Library to Honor Life of Adult Literacy Pioneer

The Livermore Public Library will celebrate the life of adult literacy pioneer Ruth Johnson Colvin in January with the “Gift of Three Words,” a display of three-word phrases in the lobby of the Civic Center Library.

Colvin, a philanthropist who founded the nonprofit Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) in 1962, died in August at 107.

LVA merged with Laubach Literacy International in 2002 to become ProLiteracy Worldwide.

Throughout her later years, Colvin was known for sharing three-word phrases, noting that the little things help people get through life. It was her hope that the phrases would be helpful to others and also inspire them to

find their own three words.

In her honor, adult learners and volunteers with the library’s literacy program contributed their own three-word phrases to create the display.

Colvin received the National Volunteer Action Award from President Ronald Reagan in 1987 and was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 1993. In 2006, she was awarded the Presiden-

tial Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award.

Colvin authored more than a dozen books, including “My Travels Throughout Life, Love, and Literacy: A Memoir,” published when she was 103. She also traveled extensively and helped start literacy programs in 26 countries.

Colvin, who lived in Syracuse, New York, vis-

ited Livermore frequently to spend time with her daughter, Lindy Webb, and according to the Livermore Public Library became a “special friend” to the adult learners, volunteers and staff in its adult literacy program.

The exhibit will be on display throughout January and members of the public are invited to contribute their own three-word phrases.



Chanukah began this year at sundown on Wednesday, Dec. 25, and ends at nightfall on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025. Chabad of the Tri-Valley is sponsoring several celebrations of Chanukah in the region. A “Chanukah Wonderland” will be held in the Pleasanton Stoneridge Shopping Center from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 26. Chanukah Under the Stars, with a public menorah lighting (pictured above: the lighting on Dec. 9, 2023), will be held at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 28, on First Street, Livermore, in front of the Bankhead Theater. “Chanukah on Ice” is to be held at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 29, at Tri Valley Ice in Dublin (Reservations required, tickets are \$20). The Sunol Menorah Lighting will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30, at the Sunol Community Park. For more information, visit <https://jewishtrivalley.com>. (File photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Vineyard Events Garner Toys And Cash for Needy Children

Two days of Holiday in the Vineyards events this month took in 850 toys and \$1,000 in cash donations for the Marine Corp Reserve Toys for Tots program, according to the Livermore Valley Wine Community (LVWC).

As it has in the past, Pacific States Petroleum

will also match what the vineyard events collected — toys and cash — for a total of 1,700 toys and \$2,080 to purchase additional gifts for needy children in the community.

“We are proud to partner with Pacific States Petroleum again to support Toys for Tots and

help bring holiday joy to children across the Bay Area,” said LVWC Executive Director Brandi Lombardi. “Holidays in the Vineyards is a tradition that is dear to locals and travelers from across the region. We are grateful to all of those who donated toys and cash gifts. With these donations, more children will have a smile on their face this holiday season.”

This is the 38th year that LVWC, previously known as the Livermore Valley Wine Association, has supported Toys for Tots.

Toys for Tots was started in 1947 by a Marine Corps Reserve unit in Los Angeles and became a national Marine Corps Reserve project the following year. It was taken over by the nonprofit Marine Toys for Tots Foundation at the Marine Corps’ request in 1991.



The Livermore Valley Wine Community’s Holiday in the Vineyards raised spirits and donations. (Photo courtesy of Livermore Valley Wine Community)

Livermore Library Will Host Job Fair

The Livermore Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., will host a job fair from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 21, with Ron Essex Photography offering free profes-

sional headshots for the first 50 attendees.

The Tri-Valley Career Center will also offer free resumé assistance.

The Opportunities Expo: Employment Re-

sources and Job Fair, sponsored by Friends of the Livermore Public Library, is open to job seekers 16 and older.

For more information, call 925-373-5505.

K of C Gives \$20,000 to East Bay Charities

The Fr. John C. Murphy Council of the Knights of Columbus donated \$20,000 this month to 10 East Bay charitable organizations during a community breakfast at St. Raymond Catholic Church in Dublin.

Checks for \$2,000 were presented to Hope Hospice, Open Heart Kitchen, St. Raymond’s Food Bank, Shepherd’s Gate, George

Mark Children’s House, Catholic Charities of the East Bay, City Serve of the Tri-Valley, the Oakland Diocese’s Morrie’s Fund for Special Religious Education, St. Raymond’s music ministry, and the Veteran’s Affairs Center for Community Development and Community Engagement.

Santa was also in attendance for the council’s an-

nual community breakfast.

The Knights of Columbus is an international Catholic fraternal organization. The Dublin council holds several fundraisers during the year, including safe-and-sane 4th of July fireworks booths, Crab Feeds, and Kettle Corn booths at Dublin’s annual St. Patrick’s Day celebration.

Blues Guitarist to Play Firehouse Arts Center

Blues guitarist and songwriter Chris Cain will appear in concert at the Firehouse Arts Center in Pleasanton on Saturday, Dec. 28.

A Bay Area native, his father took him to his first B.B. King concert when Cain was 3. He began play-

ing local clubs and festivals as a teenager.

His 1987 debut album, “Late Night City Blues,” earned him four Blues Music Award nominations, including Guitarist of the Year.

More than three decades and 14 albums later, Cain is considered among the blues’

most talented musicians.

His latest album, “Good Intentions Gone Bad,” was released this year.

Tickets to the 7 p.m. concert at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., are \$33. Tickets are available online at firehousearts.org.

Animal Shelters Urge Area Families to Adopt for Holidays

More than a dozen animal shelters in Alameda and Contra Costa counties are encouraging East Bay families to consider adopting a pet for the holidays.

East Bay shelters have continued to see an increase in rescued animals since the COVID-19 pandemic, including purebred and mixed-breed dogs and cats, according to the Valley Humane Society (VHS) in Pleasanton.

VHS notes that pets adopted from a shelter receive medical checkups and have already been vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and microchipped.

In addition to VHS, pets are available for adoption from Antioch Animal Services, Berkeley Animal Care Services, Berkeley Humane Society, Contra Costa Animal Services, East

Bay SPCA, East County Animal Shelter, Alameda Animal Shelter, South Shore Adoption Center, Hayward Animal Services, Joybound

People & Pets, Tri-City Animal Shelter, and Oakland Animal Services.

The cost of adoption varies by shelter.



Valley Humane urges the community to consider pet adoption and give an animal a new beginning for 2025. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)



Three of the five trustees of the Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) were sworn in to new terms. Left to right: Trustees Ann Marie Johnson, Dinesh Govindarao, Arun Goel, Richard Halket and Georgean Vonheeder-Leopold. (Photo courtesy of DSRSD)

Reelected Dublin Water Services District Board Members Sworn In

Three Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) board members reelected in November were sworn in on Tuesday, Dec. 17, to new four-year terms.

Dinesh Govindarao, Rich Halket, and Arun Goel will serve through December 2028. All three ran unopposed in this year’s general election.

The district provides po-

table and recycled water service to Dublin and the Dougherty Valley area of San Ramon, wastewater collection and treatment for Dublin and south San Ramon, and wastewater treatment by contract to Pleasanton. It also operates the Jeffrey G. Hansen Water Recycling Plant.

Govindarao, a San Ramon resident, was appointed

to the five-member board in 2023 to fill a vacant position. Goel, a Dublin resident, was appointed to the Board in 2021 and elected to a two-year term in 2022. Halket, also from Dublin, has served on the board since 2004.

The board also elected Goel to serve as board president for 2025, with Halket serving as board vice president.

Vangsness to Join ‘Selected Shorts’ Cast

Kirsten Vangsness, who played FBI analyst Penelope Garcia on the CBS drama “Criminal Minds” and two spinoffs, will replace comedian Wendie Malick for “Selected Shorts” at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore on Sunday, Feb. 2, according to Livermore Valley Arts. “Selected Shorts” is a theatrical reading of short stories. Vangsness will be joined by Justin Kirk, known for his roles as Prior Walter in the HBO miniseries “Angels in America” and as Andy Botwin in the Showtime series “Weeds,” and Bay Area native Richa Moorjani, who had a recurring role in the Netflix comedy-drama series “Never Have I Ever.” Tickets for the

3 p.m. performance start at \$25 and are available online

at livermorearts.org or by calling 925-373-6800.



Kirsten Vangsness (Photo courtesy of Livermore Valley Arts)

Dublin Seeks Nominations for Citizen, Young Citizen Awards

Dublin is now accepting nominations for its 2024 Citizen, Young Citizen, and Organization of the Year Awards.

The annual volunteer awards recognize a Dublin resident and student in first

through 12th grades, and a nonprofit organization that have made “significant contributions toward enhancing the quality of life” during the year, according to the city.

The awards will be present-

ed during a ceremony at the Shannon Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 19.

To nominate someone or an organization, go to dublin.ca.gov/vre. The deadline for nominations is Friday, Jan. 17.

Pleasanton Schools Host Meeting for Kindergarten Parents

The Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) will host an informational meeting for parents of new transitional and regular kindergarten students at Fairlands Elementary

School, 4151 W. Las Positas Blvd., from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025.

Online enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year, starting in Septem-

ber, will open on Monday, Feb. 3, at pleasantonusd.net/enroll. Students who turn 4 on or before Sept. 1, 2025 are eligible for transitional kindergarten (TK). Those who turn 5

on or before Sept. 1 are eligible for regular kindergarten classes.

“Transitional kindergarten allows children an extra year to become familiar with school,

building future academic success,” said PUSD Director of Student Services Janet Gates. “Our TK classrooms are very play-based, but they also follow state standards and

district curriculum.”

The informational meeting will address questions about the TK and kindergarten programs, health services, after school care, and the enrollment process.

BRIDGE

(Continued from front page)

certain bid has a certain meaning, your partner has to “alert” it (or call it out, with a special card) so the opponents get to know what you’re doing. There are no secrets. It’s not like poker,” he said.

It’s also not like what is often referred to as “party bridge.” Bergmann explained that this group, affiliated with Livermore Valley Unit 501 of the ACBL, plays duplicate bridge, which is played

who has been playing some form of the game since 1993. “Once you switch to duplicate you don’t go back.”

Gast and others, most of whom are retired, started settling in at card tables in the Odd Fellows Hall in Livermore a little before 10 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 9, for their weekly four hours of play. While the group has no affiliation with the Odd Fellows organization, Bergmann said

room cleared up any confusion by shouting out, “If anyone wants number 13 hearing aid batteries, I put some on the food table.”

Bergmann, with a hand wrapped around his ear shouted back, “What?” The room burst into laughter, of which there was no shortage in the room... that is, until the games began. Then things got quiet, and the only chit-chat was about bridge.

Club member Nancy

something that sets them apart from a lot of other bridge groups.

“Dan (Bergmann) started this a few years ago where he (told players to) come without a partner,” said Mindy Kane, one of the original Monday morning bridge players since the club’s inception about 30 years ago.

“Often the expectation is you either come with a partner or try to arrange something beforehand, and so our club just says, ‘Come the day of and we guarantee everyone will actually be matched up,’” Bergmann said.

Anyone is allowed to attend, and anyone who comes without a partner will be able to play. The only expectation is that a person knows how to play the basic game of bridge.

“There’s no expectation on your expertise,” Bergmann said. The group is happy to mentor those who have never played duplicate and welcomes new players.

Self-proclaimed newbie Julie Wente has been playing for just two years. “A lot of people have been here a long time, and they put up with me. So yeah, I was just gutsy. A lot of people don’t have my guts to come in at my level.”

“Anyone can learn how to play bridge, and you can play at any level you want,” Kane said. Referring to a fellow player who’s been playing since 1972, she added, “I’ve been playing bridge almost as long as Wayne (Vondera) and I still feel like I’m learning to play bridge. So it’s not like you learn it and then you play it. You’re constantly learning new things.”

Everyone in the room

pointed to retired oncologist Dan Wong as being by far the best player in the club.

Wong denied the reputation but shared what he loves about the game, “It’s something that kind of exercises your brain, but it’s also something social.”

He compared it to chess. “Unlike chess, there’s a certain amount of uncertainty, guessing and luck, which is actually more fun than just looking at a chess board and calculating everything out.”

The Livermore Bridge Club is the only official club open to the public in the Tri-Valley area. While nearby Stoneridge Creek in Pleasanton does have a large club, it’s only for residents of the

retirement community there.

Kane said, “And we don’t charge very much.” The Livermore Bridge Club charges \$7.00 for four hours of play from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. every Monday.

“You can’t go to a movie for \$7.00,” she added.

For more information visit livermorebridge.com.



Jim Ostrowski, directing the day’s bridge tournament, has been called over to a table to resolve an error that occurred during play. Seated, left to right, are regular players Dave Arterburn, Bill Rasnick, Nancy Rodrigue and Jane McCoy. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

on the official tournament circuit and is a variation of the base card game, contract bridge.

In party bridge on the other hand, scores are based on the luck of the deal and are independent of other players. “It’s fun but it’s a different game,” Bergmann said. “It’s just, this is very competitive, and you know...”

“Cutthroat,” added Lynn Gast of Pleasanton,

they are deeply appreciative of them.

“It is through a lot of kindness from the Odd Fellows that this is even going on,” he said.

There was the smell of brewed coffee, fresh donut holes and popcorn and a nearby table laden with homemade goodies and an incongruous package of what looked like orange toy fidget widgets. A man at the back of the

Rodrigue, co-owner of Rodrigue Molyneux Winery said, “We would love to see more young people here.”

Whether or not players partner up is one of the main differences between party bridge and duplicate bridge, and how scores are determined. Partners are required for duplicate bridge, but the way the Livermore Bridge Club handles partnering up is

SCHOOL BOARD

(Continued from front page)

who was named to the board in 2021 to finish his late wife Catherine Kuo’s term. Kuo was then elected to serve a two-year term in November 2022.

On Nov. 12, the board voted 3-2 (with Trustees Dan Cherrier and Gaby Blackman voting against) to proceed with a resolution to appoint a new board member, instead of choosing to hold a more expensive special election.



Carolina Martinez

Cherrier and Blackman opposed the resolution at the time, stating they did not believe the board could move forward with plans to fill the vacancy because the county had not yet certified the election results. The results were eventually certified on Dec. 14.

Clark, they said, could not resign from a seat he had not officially won.

At the same Nov. 12 meeting, DUSD Superintendent Chris Funk said the district’s legal team agreed that Clark’s written resignation to Funk and the Alameda County Elections office and subsequently to the County Superintendent of Schools, per Cherrier’s and Blackman’s request, was sufficient proof of his resignation.

During the Dec. 17 meet-

ing, Blackman reiterated her concerns about the process and said she had sought the advice of several attorneys at a recent California Schools Board Association conference. She said they advised her that the board violated several education codes by allowing the appointment process to go through. Blackman said that the board should “do nothing on the 17th, have him (Clark) take the oath and then immediately resign. Then you are clean (to appoint a replacement) ... you can only resign from the board if you are a member of the board.”

Kuo said he did not plan to be the tie-breaking vote in the appointment process, although his status as a former trustee allows him to be seated until an appointment is made, or there is a special election. However, because Cherrier and Blackman said they would vote against the appointment due to what they perceived as violations, without Kuo’s vote, the board would have been at a stalemate.

“I would strongly urge the entire board to vote on this process,” Kuo said during the meeting. “I would prefer not to be involved ... but I still believe I represent Area 3 and if I have to be a tiebreaker as an outgoing board member I will.”

Board President Kristin Speck said she appreciated Cherrier’s and Blackman’s positions but was ready to vote that evening on a candidate and apologized to Kuo for putting him in an awkward spot.

“I am very sorry to dump that on you, but I guess we need your decision,” said Speck.

Funk agreed the vote

should go forward, adding that advice received from an education conference should not override DUSD’s legal team.

“So, this is my 13th year as a sitting superintendent and I have gone to 13 of these conferences and at every single presentation I have attended, they (attorneys) state that ‘we are not providing legal advice and we urge you to refer to your own legal counsel,’” said Funk. “And I have done that ... we have followed board policy, and this evening is the time where the board can make a decision.”

Six applicants applied for the provisional appointment but only three candidates were deemed qualified for the position. One candidate did not reside in Area 3, a requirement for the seat — Area 3 includes an area on the city’s southern limit between Dougherty and Fallon roads. Another candidate was awaiting U.S. citizenship papers and thus not qualified to apply, and the third candidate, according to DUSD Superintendent Chris Funk, dropped out at the last minute. The three remaining candidates interviewed by the board during the meeting were Martinez, Daniel Hor, a technology researcher, and Cleyton Ribeiro, a project manager.

Following the vote but before Martinez was sworn in, Cherrier wished her well but said it would not likely be a seat she would hold for long.

“Welcome aboard, Trustee Martinez, and this is nothing personal, but in my opinion, the board has taken an illegal action and I’m going to be leaving the proceedings because I think anything this board does right now is against the law,” Cherrier said.

“I will also be discussing with Area 3 people to have you removed from the office.”

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A Community Carol

By Christina Cavallaro

I remember my first Christmas in Madrid when I lived there for some years after college. It was something straight out of a Dickens novel circa 1840. There were vendors actually selling chestnuts roasted over an open fire. I had never seen, let alone eaten, a chestnut of any kind in my life.

On La Nochebuena (Christmas Eve) in Spain, Santa isn't really a thing, but Midnight Mass is. La Iglesia de San Nicolás de Bari, dedicated to the very same St. Nicholas who is associated with Christmas, is thought to be the oldest church in the city; the church is still running along after more than 800 years — the church's origins date at least back to 1202.

Known as Madrid's Italian Church, it still offers Mass in that language on occasion, in honor of the Italian city, Bari, where St. Nicholas's relics are said to be interred. It's a short distance from Madrid's Royal Palace, where a real king still lives: Juan Carlos I during my time there, his son Felipe VI today. The Spanish monarchy dates to the 15th century... and I had a perfect view of the royal family's palace from the terrace of the apartment where I lived. The restaurant down the street, Casa Botín, was founded in 1725.

The point is, in Europe you'd be hard pressed to look around and find a community that hasn't been around for centuries, and more likely millennia. Madrid itself was founded in 865.

Right now, I've been reading Anne Marshall Homan's book, "Historic Livermore, California," published in 2007, and it's a fascinating read. I learned that our oldest known church, Asbury United Methodist, was founded in 1867. But the coolest thing is that the 665-year age difference between our oldest church and Madrid's means that many of the people named in Homan's book and their families are still very present in our daily lives.

On assignment recently covering the Livermore Bridge Club at Odd Fellows Hall a couple weeks ago I noticed a woman in a stylish 1970s-inspired puffy vest suddenly rise and move to a different table. I asked her why and she explained that the East/West pairs move at the midway point in the session and North/South pairs stay. When I thanked her for the info and asked her name she said, "Julie... Wentle." Without thinking I immediately hugged her because I felt like I knew her given the fact that her husband Philip's family owns and manages the oldest continuously operated family-owned winery in Livermore and the United States.

Last August I interviewed fourth-generation Pleasanton native Donna Kamp McMillion who co-authored (with Lauren de Vore) "Cruising Down Memory Lane: Stories of Pleasanton in the 1950s," published last year.

She said to me, "We are all so connected." Her family's land in Pleasanton butted up against the Hagemanns' Livermore farm off Stanley Boulevard. At one point her family had 800 head of beef cattle and the Livermore ranchers used to come to their Pleasanton brandings and roundups.

Then in October, during the Sunol Glen School Halloween parade I spotted 83-year-old Jim O'Laughlin, a fifth-generation Sunolian whose family used to own the entire part of the town where he was holding court with residents, chilling with a cup of coffee outside the cute new Sunol Coffee truck.

And even if your family doesn't go back several generations here there is still so much welcoming and room to be a part of the fabric of the community as it grows.

A couple weeks ago, I ducked into the Vietnamese restaurant next door to Dandy Dogs for a solo bowl of pho and ran into a new friend, Eleanor "Ellie" Dixon, who grew up in Hawaii. She's a regular singer at Pinot's Palette's open mic nights and had moved to Livermore to work at Sandia National Laboratory. She has told me before that she spent so much time in her life earning university degrees in the sciences that her passion for music often took a back seat. "And so this is my restart," she said. She loves the Tri-Valley and her life in Livermore. "It's so fun. We're building a life and a community." In her case, through music.

And as a community, I love that we've got each other's backs, especially at this time of year that can be difficult for so many.

Recently on Nextdoor, Traci A. of Dublin Ranch, posted her thanks to a person who had just paid for her Starbucks in the drive-thru on Fallon Road. "Little did you know," she wrote, "I was sitting in my car crying because holidays are hard for me after losing my mom and having no family of my own yet. This made my day!"

The Colosseum in Rome, Italy, was built between 70 and 81 A.D. as a public arena where people could watch gladiatorial games and other events.

Just last week Visit Tri-Valley announced that Dublin will be home to a new 5,000-seat multi-use, state-of-the-art event center.

Europe, looks like we're gaining on you. It's exciting to be part of a community that is still in its history-making stages. And as one who believes in the power of writing to make the mortal immortal, it's an honor and a privilege to be a scribe of the past, present and future in the Tri-Valley.

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? If so, we want to hear from you. Please email me at christina@independentnews.com.

Livermore Schools Adopt Trustee Boundary Map

The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) has adopted a map for the election of school board members beginning in 2026.

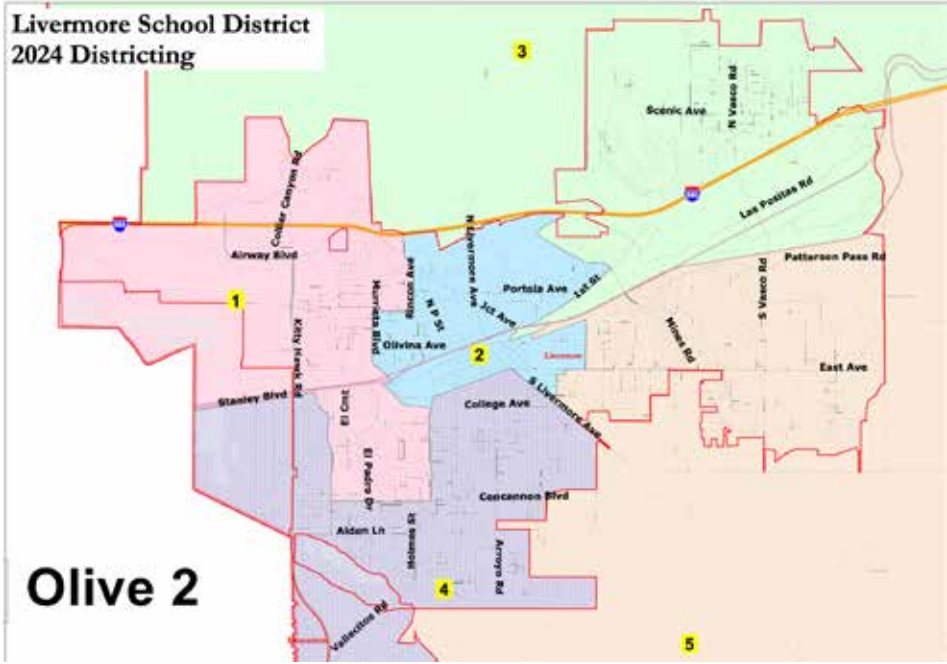
Designated the Olive 2 map on the district's website, the proposed boundaries for the switch from at-large to five by-district elections of trustees now goes to the Alameda County Committee on School District Organization for final approval.

Area 1 roughly corresponds to the northwestern portion of the city of Livermore, Area 2 the central part of the city, Area 3 the northeastern part and the valleys north of the city, Area 4 the southwestern part of the city, and Area 5 the southeastern part of the city and the southern valleys.

The board of trustees also swore in two new members on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Deena Kaplanis and Christiaan VandenHeuvel both received more than 15,000 votes in the November general election, defeating four other candidates in what could be the district's last at-large election for trustees.

They replace former trustees Yanira Guzmán and Kristie Wang, neither of whom ran for reelection. Wang ran for and was elected to the Livermore City Council.



The Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District has approved the new trustee area map, dubbed "Olive 2." Starting in 2026, voters will elect its Board of Trustees by district. (Image courtesy of LVJUSD)

Library Displays Traveling Artist Exhibits

The annual Tri-Valley Traveling Artists show is now on display at the Livermore Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave.

Featured artists include Bonnie Bartlett, Robin Leimer, Charlotte Severin, Lorraine Wells, Rebecca Davies, Helene Royslance

and Kathleen Elm, with works in oil, watercolor and pencil. The exhibit continues through the end of the month.

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Now through Dec. 30

TRI-VALLEY TRAVELING ARTISTS EXHIBIT

Local artists (TVTA - Tri Valley Traveling Artists) are displaying their work at the Livermore Community Library at 1188 Livermore Ave. This show features a variety of media and scenes through the eyes of the artists as they travel both locally and far and wide. Mon.-Thurs. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fri. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sun. 12 to 6 p.m.

Now through Jan. 16

MOBILE MEDICAL OUTREACH UNIT VISIT

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System's Mobile Medical Outreach Unit will be at the Civic Center Library parking lot, located at 1188 S. Livermore Ave., from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month. Medical providers will offer examinations, consultations, and referrals to veterans. Veterans who are not enrolled or are uncertain about eligibility for health services can visit the outreach team for help with their questions. Veterans can also apply for VA Health Care online by visiting www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction. For additional program information, call 925-373-5500, visit library.livermoreca.gov.

Saturday, Dec. 28

BLUES PERFORMER CHRIS CAIN

Guitar virtuoso, vocalist and songwriter Chris Cain will perform live at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Blvd., Pleasanton, on Dec. 28, at 7 p.m. Cain, once known as "one of the greatest guitarists you've never heard," is now celebrated by fans and fellow musicians alike as being among the blues' most talented and exciting players. Tickets are \$33. See www.firehousearts.org for more info.

Monday-Friday, Dec. 30 through Jan. 3 (no class Jan. 1)

WINTER BREAK ART CAMP

Livermore Valley Arts will hold a Winter Break Art Camp for kids ages 6 to 15 at the Bothwell Arts Center, 2466 Eighth St., Livermore, on Dec. 30, 31, 2024 and Jan. 2 and 3, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for \$280. Bothwell will provide all of the art materials and a snack in the morning and the afternoon. Scholarships are available. Go to livermorearts.org/event-calendar for more info.

Thursdays, Jan. 9 | Jan. 16

SQUARE DANCING WITH CACTUS CORNERS

Cactus Corners is a nonprofit offering free introductory square-dancing lessons to new dancers on Jan. 9 and Jan. 16 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Anyone age 8 and up is invited (younger ages considered based on maturity). This is a great activity for the entire family to have fun and make new friends! At the Sunrise Mobile Home Park Clubhouse, 856 Sundial Circle, Livermore (in Springtown). For more information and to be placed on the class notification list, email Margaret at mmiller1435@gmail.com or call 925-447-6980.

ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES TOPSCIENCE

TOPScience is a group that partners with elementary school science teachers to enhance learning for both students and teachers. It is an opportunity to pass on skills and knowledge while having fun and contributing to schools in Livermore. For more information or to volunteer, contact Art Krakowsky at artkr@sbcglobal.net or 925-455-0486.

ONGOING EVENTS

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.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

The Unitarian Universalist Church is welcoming to all. Join in on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. for music, singing, and conversation. The church is located at 1893 North Vasco Rd. in Livermore. For more information, visit uucil.org.

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR) CHAPTER MEETING

The local Josefa Higuera Livermore Chapter meets on the first Saturday of the month from Sept. to May. The DAR is a non-profit, non-political volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children. For more information, visit jhl.californiadar.org or email jane.everett@sbcglobal.net.

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Asbury United Methodist Church invites the community to join for worship at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. This community practices loving neighbors in daily life. The church has Sunday School and nursery care, and worship is followed by a fellowship time. The church is located at 4743 East Ave., in Livermore. For more information, visit asburylive.org.

WINGS - WOMEN IN GOD'S SPIRIT

WINGS is a faith enrichment group of multi-generational Catholic women who meet October thru May on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, 1315 Lomitas Ave., Livermore. Attendees can enjoy a variety of speaker presentations and topics, small group discussion, fellowship and more. All are welcome! See www.stcharleslivermore.org/wings for more information.

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

TVNPA Chair Receives Philanthropy Award

The East Bay Leadership Council has presented its 2024 Philanthropy Award to Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance (TVNPA) Board Chair Marti Sutton.

Sutton accepted the award at the annual Threads

of Hope Awards hosted by the council and Diablo Magazine in Walnut Creek on Thursday, Dec. 12.

Sutton "embodies everything a nonprofit leader should be," said TVNPA President Kathy Young.

"Her generosity, vision, and deep commitment to serving others have profoundly shaped our organization and countless other nonprofits in our community. We are incredibly fortunate to have Marti guiding TVNPA as we celebrate our 10th anniversary this year."

In a news release, TVNPA, which describes itself as a "regional convener" whose mission is to strengthen other Tri-Valley nonprofit organizations, praised Sutton's "tireless commitment to advancing the work of nonprofits and improving the lives of countless individuals across the Tri-Valley."

TVNPA, based in Livermore, added that Sutton "deeply understands the power of nonprofits and philanthropy to drive meaningful change, not just for individuals but for entire communities."

Based in Walnut Creek, the East Bay Leadership Council is a policy advocacy organization that seeks to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in East Bay.

Diablo Magazine is a lifestyles publication covering San Francisco and the East Bay region.

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OBITUARIES

Jay Albert Miller Jan. 22, 1960 – Dec. 6, 2024



Jay Albert Miller, 64, passed away unexpectedly on Dec. 6, 2024. Born on Jan. 22, 1960, in San Jose, California, Jay spent his childhood in Saratoga before settling in Livermore, where he built a career in retail management and a life filled with family, humor, and cherished memories.

Jay was a devoted husband to his wife of over 20 years, Margarita, and a loving father who found immense joy in his family. He was incredibly proud of his four children and cherished supporting them in their pursuits and celebrating their achievements. Jay instilled in his children a deep respect for nature and the ocean, teaching them to appreciate its power and beauty while embracing it without fear. These lessons became an enduring bond between Jay and his children, reflecting his love of the outdoors and

his desire to share its wonder with them.

Jay enjoyed playing golf, though he often wished he had more time to hit the course. He also loved day trips to Santa Cruz, playing fantasy football with his family, and sharing his sense of humor, even if his jokes occasionally earned more eyerolls than laughs. He treasured the simple pleasures in life and valued the time

spent with his loved ones, including their “COVID puppy,” Aspen.

Jay is survived by his wife, Margarita; his four children, Benjamin, Denny, Isabella, and Jake; his father, Ronald Miller; his sister, Beverly Duarte; and his brother, Richard Miller. He was preceded in death by his mother, Susan Miller (née Mausser). Jay also leaves behind a large extended family, including nieces and nephews who will remember his warm heart.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to a charity of your choice or taking a moment to share laughter with those you love in his honor.

Jay Albert Miller—his legacy of love, laughter, and family pride will live on in the hearts of those he touched.

Susan (Lamski) Fitzgerald Oct. 5, 1956 – Nov. 20, 2024



With great sadness and heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Susan (Lamski) Fitzgerald on Nov. 20, 2024, who died from breast cancer. She was born in Lisbon, North Dakota, on Oct. 5, 1956 to Eugene and Mary (Bixby) Lamski. Sue graduated from Amador Valley High School in 1974. She moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, to attend UNLV where she graduated in 1987 with a BS in Computer Science. She met her husband Kirk Fitzgerald at UNLV and they married in 1988. While living in Las Vegas, she worked for the IRS as a lead programmer and then worked for Utility Partners as a team leader.

In 2005, Sue and Kirk relocated to Reno, Nevada, subsequently moving to Sparks, Nevada, in 2009. During this period, Sue re-entered the workforce on a part-time basis. She was employed by the Nevada NASA Space Grant Consortium as a coordinator and then she served as a grant manager for the University of Nevada,

Reno’s GK-12 Grant. After her initial cancer diagnosis, Sue continued working part time for UNR, College of Education. After a short break, she worked for Data Conversion Specialists until retiring in 2023

Sue was adventurous and loved the outdoors. She attended flight school in her 20’s, rode dirt bikes in Las Vegas, and motorcycles in Sparks. Sue liked riding her mountain bike around the rough desert terrain of Sparks for exercise. Sue and Kirk loved camping in their new trailer and playing card games with family and friends. They

traveled to Poland, the BVI, Mexico, Canada, and Alaska. Sue took so much pride in her homemaking, decorating, and crafting skills and sparing no expense when decorating for their legendary Halloween parties.

In 2015, Sue was diagnosed with breast cancer and refused to be held back, going through treatments until her cancer went into remission. In 2022, her cancer returned. Over the next two years, she tried five different treatments, but sadly, none of them worked. She was predeceased by her mother and grandparents. She is survived by her husband Kirk, father Eugene (Patti) Lamski, brother Douglas (Sue) Lamski, sister Lisa (Rod) Coleman, nieces Melissa (Troy) Cavallo, April (Don) Rudish, Taylor (Paul) Culbertson, Hannah Lamski, nephew Tucker (Katelyn) Lamski, aunts, uncles, cousins and many friends. Sue was a devoted wife, daughter, sister, and friend. It brings us all comfort to know that she lived a full, happy and amazing life.

Michelle Lee Funk Jan. 14, 1968 – Nov. 24, 2024



Michelle Lee Funk, a longtime Livermore resident, lost her battle with cancer on Nov. 24, 2024, at the Kaiser Medical Center in Walnut Creek, after an extremely hard fight for the past ten months. Michelle was born in Santa Rosa, California, to Michael Edward Funk (Sr.) and Patricia Ann Mullin (Lyons). Michelle was a resident of Livermore for the past 50 years, ever since her family moved here when her grandparents were running Sands Motel on First Street. Michelle attended Portola Elementary School, Junction Avenue Middle School, and graduated in 1986 from Livermore High School. Michelle worked in the grocery store industry most of her life; for the past few years working for Raley’s in Pleasanton, and then Lucky on Holmes Street in Livermore. Earlier in her adult life, she took some years off of work to raise her son, Joshua. During that time, she was a large part of the skateboard and extreme sports community in Livermore. She spent many years taking her son and local kids to skateparks and competitions, as well as always helping out at Street Science Skate Shop in Livermore as much as she could. Michelle grew up building and showing Volkswagens with her father



Michael Sr., and brothers, Mark and Michael Funk. Many people remember her for her pink Volkswagen Bug she drove around town in and after high school. Michelle had a love for the cowboy culture, and was very proud to be from a town where it is so rich. She collected and framed Livermore Rodeo posters from most years in her lifetime, and always loved attending the parade, mixer, and other events of that second

weekend in June. Michelle had a heart of gold, and even if she did not have a lot for herself, she always did whatever she could to help other people. During the past few years of her life, Michelle’s favorite things to do were reading, sometimes finishing 300+ page books in a day or two, attending many car and motorcycle shows with her son, Joshua, shopping and eating lunch and dinner with her mother, Patricia, and hanging out with her grand-dog, Artie, on a daily basis. Michelle was predeceased by her grandparents Jean and Stan Mullin, and her stepfather Paul Lyons. Michelle is survived by her son Joshua Moore, her mother Patricia Lyons, her father Michael Funk, her aunts: Nancy and Sandy Mullin, and Tony Spencer, her uncle Brian Mullin, cousins: Stefanie Gigliotti, Kristina Thompson, and Joe Spencer, step-sisters: Becky Lyons (Deniz), Liz Lyons (Gillihan), and Heather Lyons, and her brothers Michael and Mark Funk and many nieces and nephews. Michelle will be extremely missed by anyone who knew and loved her. Per Michelle’s wishes there will be no services held at this time, however a donation to The Skatepark Project foundation can be made in her honor.

Michael Filgate Nov. 22, 1955 – Dec. 2, 2024

Michael was a uniquely gifted individual, best known for his incredible talent as a horse rider. He won every Gymkhana barrel race he entered, showcasing a natural bond with his beloved horse, Polly Jo. Those who saw them together knew this was a rare and special connection.

Michael had a deep love for his nieces and nephews. Though he often kept his emotions guarded, his eyes would

light up in their presence, reflecting a joy he didn’t always share with the world.

Throughout his life, Michael grappled with inner struggles. His passing leaves a deep ache in our hearts, but we take solace in knowing that his soul has found rest and healing. Though his battles were difficult, his faith remained unshaken—a testament to his trust in God’s eternal love and his faith in his savior Jesus Christ.

While we grieve the loss of Michael, we also celebrate his reunion with the Lord and the peace that now surrounds him. We cherish the memories of his life, his talents, and the moments he allowed us to see the love he carried within.

Michael is now free, riding the fields of heaven with Polly Jo, his spirit unburdened and his faith fulfilled.

Michael is survived by his sisters, brother, nieces and nephews.

Dublin Recycler Will Pick Up Unwanted Textiles for Recycling

Dublin’s contract recycling company, Amador Valley Industries (AVI), will pick up textiles between Monday, Jan. 6, and Friday, Jan. 10.

Residents with textiles to be picked up should call AVI, 925-479-9545, to schedule

pickup at least seven days prior to their regular trash collection day.

Textiles must be placed in a clear plastic bag, which will be picked up by a separate driver who may service an area earlier or later than regular trash collection vehicles.

Items acceptable for recycling include clean and dry clothing, shoes, stuffed animals, towels, bedding and blankets.

Textile collections are scheduled quarterly. For more information, go to amadorvalleyindustries.com.

Teen Poetry Winners Announced

Livermore Poet Laureate Peggy Schimmelman has announced the winners of the City of Livermore’s Teen Poet of the First Semester contest. Students were asked to write to the theme, “The Dance,” subject to any interpretation. The winning poems were chosen from dozens of entries in each division.

The High School Poet of the First Semester is Elena Nguyen Schertzer for her poem “Untitled.” Elena is in 9th Grade at Granada High School. Her English teacher is Taylor Galland.

The Middle School Poet of the First Semester is Anand Sagar for his poem “The Dance of Life.” Anand is in 6th Grade at Chris-

tensen Middle School, and his teacher is Shelli Rhodes.

Along with a certificate signed by the city to be presented on Jan. 8, the winners will receive a \$25 gift certificate from Story Coffee or Sauced Barbecue, and their poems will be displayed in the teen section of the Civic Center Library.

Library to Host Meditation Webinar

The Livermore Public Library will host a live Zoom-based webinar, “Begin the New Year with the Healing Power of Meditation,” from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16.

Bruce Faithwick, a

software industry business consultant, will lead the free seminar, which will include techniques to relieve mental stress and anxiety. The seminar will also include a short meditation sitting for par-

ticipants.

To access the program, use the link tinyurl.com/2py6jt5t. Registration is not required.

For more information, go to library.livermoreca.gov or call 925-373-5500.

Final East Bay Park District Historic Photo Collection Released Online

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has released the last of four historic photo collections culled from more than 15,000 negatives donated to the district in 2016 by the family of professional photographer Martin J. Cooney.

While Cooney took some of the photos, most were taken by Nancy McKay, who became his apprentice in 1968 while working in

the EBRPD’s Public Affairs Department.

McKay was the district’s primary photographer for more than 37 years, from the 1960s to the 1980s.

The latest digital collection, now available on the EBRPD website, is “Special Events” and focuses on dedications, groundbreakings, and other media photo opportunities.

“At the culmination of our 90th anniversary year,

it gives me great pleasure to share this final time capsule of photos documenting the milestone events and activities during this important era of the district’s growth,” said Archives Program Supervisor Brenda Montano.

Curated by district staff and volunteers, the online collections also include “People in Parks,” “Park Landscapes,” and “Park Workers.”

The photos can be seen at ebparks.org.

Secular Jewish Group to Celebrate Tu BiShvat

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, a secular organization for those who identify as Jewish through family, culture or history, will celebrate Tu BiShvat with a farm day and potluck dinner from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16.

Also known as Rosh HaShanah La’Ilanot, or “New Year of the Trees,” the Jewish holiday is viewed as a day of ecological

awareness in contemporary Israel.

The local celebration will include learning about historic ranches in the Livermore Valley followed by an outdoor secular seder and potluck meal.

To learn more about Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, go to trivalleyculturaljews.org. To attend the Tu BiShvat celebration, email culturaljews@gmail.com or call 925-399-8029.

BUDGET (Continued from front page)

would have been limited to three meetings between January and March 2025 because of Brown Act requirements, it would likely only have had time to meet twice because of the delay in its formation, City Manager Gerry Beaudin said. California’s 1953 Ralph M. Brown Act specifies open-meeting rules, such as notification and public-hearing requirements, that were intended to preserve the public’s control over their local governing agencies. The act limits how frequently meetings can be held. As a result, the city’s self-imposed deadline of wrapping up the committee work by March would allow for just three meetings — or two, given the amount of time it would take to bring the 11 committee members up to speed.

In his move to table the plan, Balch raised concerns about the efficacy of such a committee.

“A citizens’ group might have a very significant place in (the process), but at three meetings, it is difficult to believe that 11 members meeting three times will be able to give me confidence that they have the detailed knowledge of the budget,” Balch said. He reasoned that the new council also needed a primer on the budgeting process before committing to the engagement plan, which could cost the city up to \$50,000.

With time constraints in mind, Balch suggested the immediate formation of the Ad Hoc Committee consisting of himself and Gaidos would be more nimble working with staff on budget issues than the full council.

Gaidos said he was willing

to participate. Balch opposed and Gaidos supported a ballot measure that would have increased the city sales tax.

“Had this not been the first meeting after the election when we’re all sworn in, and we had a full year, I don’t think this would be absolutely necessary,” he said. “We’d have more time to get at the issue. The fact remains we’re on a short time crunch, and we’re going to be asked to make decisions in the next six months. And I want to get as much information as I can.”

Testa, however, opposed the Ad Hoc Committee, fearing exclusion of the other councilmembers from the budget process.

“I really would like to get the Budget Advisory Committee launched,” Testa said after the decision to delay the vote until January. “I think that that is our best way of really educating 11 people to give us input. And I like that it is a blend of people coming from all of our different perspectives. I just would have more trust in that.”

Nibert also urged the council to move ahead with the Budget Advisory Committee, which he said the public has been calling for.

“It just seems to me that delay is denial,” said Nibert.

Although Eicher recognized the exclusion concern, he supported the Ad Hoc Committee because of the need to move quickly.

Four of the five council members also questioned the prudence of conducting another community survey on budget issues — only Nibert didn’t object to staff designing a survey. The council

members criticized a community survey from earlier this year meant to gauge support for Measure PP, a ballot measure to increase the city’s sales tax from 10.25% to 10.75%. Conducted by consulting firm Clifford Moss, the survey asked residents to prioritize city operations, such as emergency services and public safety, which was used as a proxy for whether the tax increase would be supported, but it didn’t specifically ask residents if they’d support the increase.

“Most who took (the survey) felt that it was an insult to their intelligence, because it was pretty basic: ‘Do you want to drown puppies, or do you not want to drown puppies’ kind of questions,” said Testa. “I mean, obviously, we don’t want to drown puppies. People felt insulted by that.”

Measure PP ultimately failed with 54.18% of voters opposed and 45.82% in favor.

Balch and Eicher agreed with Testa, saying that conducting another survey on the budget so soon after the sales tax survey did not seem warranted.

If the council goes forward with the Ad Hoc Committee, or the Budget Advisory Committee or both on Jan. 9, 2025, Advisory Committee deliberations could begin as early as Jan. 15, while ad hoc meetings could begin at any time. The full city council then would expect to receive a baseline budget and long-range financial forecast presentation in February, followed by the results of the city’s budget public engagement efforts and a budget workshop prior to adoption in June 2025.

Granada Continues Shutout Streak with Tie Against Livermore

By Phil Jensen

The Granada High School girls soccer team has not allowed a goal this season. That has included three ties in their eight games, including a 0-0 match with rival Livermore on Dec. 18. Granada remains undefeated with a 5-0-3 record. “That’s probably the first thing that we decided to work on. We’re going to be very, very good defensively, and it starts with our mentality,” said Giovanni Monroe, in his first season as Granada’s coach. “Everyone’s on the same page and working super hard to not allow a goal in.” The team’s backline has been led by juniors Harper Hopcus and Kaitlyn Denton, and seniors Madeline Contreras and Nikki Orth. “They’ve been rock-solid back there,” Monroe said. But he also said that defense is a responsibility for all Granada players. “Our forwards defend, wingers

defend. If you are an attacker, you’re expected to defend,” he said. Monroe is the girls technical director for the Fusion Soccer Club, and has also coached in the Seattle area, and in England and Wales. Granada outshot Livermore 11-6 in the game. Both Matadors sophomore goalie Megan Silva and Livermore freshman goalkeeper Kendall Coates had five saves. “I think Livermore soccer, not just Livermore High but both schools, are on the up,” said Livermore coach Keith Miller, whose team is now 2-3-1. “I thought the JV game and the varsity game were at a super-high level. ... A clean sheet against that team is impressive. We gave up too many corners, but we defended them well.” Livermore has senior leadership in returning starters Makenna Smith, Eleanor Cowan, Reece Bingham, Samantha Hurtado and Miriam Soliman.

Granada also has experienced players back, including Silva, Hopcus, Contreras, senior Ava Burnham and juniors Elle Eichenberger and Celeste Gaucin-Robles. The match on Dec. 18 was a nonleague match-up. Granada opened last week with a 2-0 win over West-Tracy on Dec. 16. The Matadors also beat Dougherty Valley (in another nonleague game) 4-0 on Dec. 14. June Hopcus, a freshman, produced two goals in the victory. Harper Hopcus and Eichenberger added one apiece. Gaucin-Robles passed for two assists, and junior Kailey Gandolfo also had an assist. Livermore beat Arroyo-San Lorenzo 11-0 on Dec. 13 in a nonleague match. Rhiannon Stewart, a sophomore, led the way for the Cowboys with three goals. Hurtado, Cowan, and sophomore Aletheia Luciano Lollis added two goals apiece. Linnea LaFortune, a junior, and Luciano Lollis

passed for two assists each, and Coates had four saves. The Cowboys also fell 2-1 to Tracy on Dec. 16. Coates had seven saves in the game.

Both teams don’t play again until next year. Granada hosts Pittsburg on Jan. 7 before opening East Bay Athletic League play

on Jan. 9 at Foothill. Both matches start at 6:30 p.m. Livermore begins EBAL play on Jan. 9 when it hosts Dublin at 6:30 p.m.



Granada’s sophomore goalie Megan Silva had five saves during the team’s matchup against Livermore on Dec. 18. Silva has not allowed a single goal all season. [\[See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia\]](#) (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)



Foothill junior point guard Sophie Nguyen tries for a layup on the Falcons’ Dec. 20 game against visiting Tracy. Nguyen scored a game-high 17 points for Foothill. [\[See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia\]](#) (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Late-game Scoring Surge Lifts Foothill to Victory Over Tracy

By Phil Jensen

In a basketball game full of scoring runs, the Foothill High School girls team had the most important one in a 47-45 nonleague victory over visiting Tracy on Dec. 20. The Falcons had a 7-0 run in a one-minute stretch of the fourth quarter to take a 46-39 lead, then held off a charge by the Bulldogs to win. “We added some new things to allow our shooters to get more opportunities,” said Foothill coach Cheryl Namoca. “We are a little more defensive-minded this season, so we’re going to press a little bit more and try to take our advantages that way.” Foothill, which doesn’t have any players taller than 5 feet 7 inches, and which entered this week with a 3-5 record, has not allowed an opponent more than 52 points in a game this season. The Falcons have held five of their opponents under 48 points. The Falcons return two starters, and five players total, from last season’s 20-9 team. Sophie Nguyen and Laila Shore, a pair of

juniors, both started last season and bring leadership to Foothill’s backcourt. They combined for 27 points against Tracy, with Nguyen pouring in a game-high 17 and Shore adding 10. “They’ve both improved over the last year,” Namoca said. Foothill had a number of guards in its starting lineup against Tracy, including senior Megan Ngim (another returner), who scored seven points and produced a team-high five steals. The Falcons’ other returners are junior Savannah Belong and senior post Sachi Malik, who had six rebounds against Tracy. Sophia Lara, a freshman, also had six rebounds. Hailey White (also a freshman) and Nguyen both passed for a team-high three assists. The pivotal run against Tracy started with a long two-pointer by Ngim for a 41-39 Foothill lead with 4:12 remaining. White then found Nguyen for a three-pointer, and a layup by Lara with 3:12 remaining gave Foothill a 46-39 advantage. Tracy got within one point at 46-45 with 1:27 to go on a basket

by Gabriella Hernandez, but the Bulldogs were not able to get any closer to the lead. Shore sank a free throw with 13.5 seconds remaining for the eventual final point of the game. Foothill bolted out to an 11-0 lead in the first quarter with four players scoring. “We’re starting to see open lanes a little bit more,” said Namoca, who has also been working with her team on attacking downhill. Shore led the way in that run with five points. The Falcons led by as many as 13 points in the first quarter, but Tracy (which fell to 2-3 with the loss) battled back and trailed by only six points at halftime (30-24). Although the Bulldogs never took the lead, they tied the game at 39 in the fourth quarter on a layup by Kyrrahlynn Dowell, who produced a team-high 14 points. On Dec. 21, Foothill fell 41-25 to Washington-Fremont, which improved to 8-2. Both Nguyen and White scored eight points to pace the Falcons. Foothill’s next game is at Santa Clara on Dec. 27 at 6:15 p.m.

Bankhead Theater Opens New Year with Music-Filled January Lineup

The Livermore Valley Arts kicks off the 2025 portion of its Bankhead

Presents with a strong lineup of music concerts and stars this January.

The first month of the year brings a roster of amazing performances to downtown Livermore, including the much-requested return of Jim Curry and his previous Bankhead hot seller, “Take Me Home: The Music of John Denver” on Saturday, Jan. 4. Curry returns with his uncanny ability to mirror John Denver’s voice and clean-cut look, transporting audiences to the time when “Rocky Mountain High,” “Sunshine,” “Calypso,” and “Annie’s Song” topped the charts. Tickets to the 8 p.m. show are \$25-\$65 and nearly

sold out. Also coming to the stage in January is the most successful music group in the history of “America’s Got Talent,” The Texas Tenors, on Friday, Jan. 17. The Texas Tenors are on their 15th Anniversary Tour, rousing audiences with patriotic favorites and everything from country

to classical. Tickets to the 8 p.m. show are \$25-\$100. Best New Artist Grammy Award-winner Colin Hay plays on Friday, Jan. 24. The former frontman of 1980s hitmakers Men at Work (“Down Under,” “Overkill,” and “Who Can It Be Now?”) will rock the Bankhead with his distinctive voice on Friday,

Jan. 24 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25-\$100 and close to sold out. The month closes out with the return of Classic Albums Live, this time to perform Stevie Ray Vaughan’s “Texas Flood” in full on Friday, Jan. 31. Tickets to the 8 p.m. show are \$25-\$75. Tickets are available at [www.LivermoreArts.org](#)



Jim Curry once again will bring the music of John Denver to the Bankhead at 8 p.m. on Jan. 4, 2025. (Photo courtesy of Jim Curry)

Shoppers Stuff a Wheels Bus with Toys

Shoppers donated more than 250 toys to the annual Stuff-a-Bus holiday event at the Livermore Walmart on Saturday, Dec. 14, according to the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority

(LAVTA), which operates the Wheels bus service. “It’s always heartwarming to see the community come together with the spirit of the season,” said LAVTA Customer Experience Director

David Mark. “Our annual toy drive is a point of pride for the agency, and we’re so thankful for the over 250 toys that filled the bus.” This was the 13th year for the Stuff-a-Bus event.

Dublin Urges Recycling Christmas Trees

Dublin is urging residents to recycle their Christmas trees, which can be turned into compost. The city’s contract trash hauler, Amador Valley Industries, will pick up trees for recycling from single-family homes on residents’ regular

trash day from Monday, Jan. 6, through Friday, Jan. 31. Dublin Boy Scout Troop 905 will also pick up trees for recycling on Saturday, Jan. 4. The Scouts are asking for a \$10 donation. Reservations must be made at [troop905.org](#) by 3 p.m. on

Friday, Jan. 3. Dublin residents can also cut up their trees and put them in their compost carts along with yard trimmings, food scraps, and food soiled paper. Trees must be free of flocking and tinsel to be composted.

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FCI DUBLIN

(Continued from front page)

nia Coalition for Women Prisoners and other inmate advocates against FBOP that will provide court-monitored protections for hundreds of women from the Dublin prison still incarcerated at other institutions across the country.

Those protections provide access to attorneys, counselors and monitors to ensure abuse doesn't recur, limits on the use of solitary confinement for minor infractions, restoration of early release credits lost when they were transferred, and

release to halfway houses in their home communities as early as possible. The massive legal payout is the latest development for the scandal-plagued institution that became known as the "rape club."

Eight former employees — including a warden, chaplain and guards — have been charged since 2021 with sexually abusing numerous women in custody. The institution's reputation for its toxic environment resulted in federal legislation to fix the entire federal prison system.

Pride said correctional officers treated her clients as "objects for their own exploitation, threatening them with retaliation or denying basic necessities to ensure silence." In her statement, Pride said guards targeted vulnerable inmates, many of whom were survivors of domestic violence and child molestation.

Pride said, "Regardless of why these women were incarcerated, being subjected to repeated sexual abuse was never part of their sentences. This case is a stark reminder of

how we must safeguard the dignity and humanity of our most vulnerable populations."

According to Pride's law firm, the settlement will be distributed among the women based on individual assessments of their experiences conducted by an independent, unidentified third party to reflect the trauma they endured. The amounts awarded will be the most any individual prisoner has ever received in such a case. The total payment averages out to \$1.13 million per inmate.

Many additional lawsuits involving other former FCI Dublin inmates and law firms are pending in the courts.

In a statement, the FBOP confirmed the agreement to settle multiple lawsuits alleging sexual abuse at FCI Dublin.

"The FBOP strongly condemns all forms of sexually abusive behavior and takes seriously its duty to protect the individuals in our custody, as well as maintain the safety of our employees and community," the statement said. "The settlement agree-

ments, which have been approved by the Department, resolve over 100 individual lawsuits. After the parties negotiated their settlement amount, a third-party neutral process was used to allocate the funds among the plaintiffs."

The statement added: "The FBOP is dedicated to appropriately addressing the consequences of sexually abusive behavior at FCI Dublin. The FBOP remains committed to rooting out criminal behavior and holding accountable those who violate their oath of office."

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LEGAL NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610704

The following person(s) doing business as: American Academy of Emerging Science, 101 E. Vineyard Ave, Suite 119-108, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): American Emerging Science Association, 101 E. Vineyard Ave, Suite 119-108, 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/: Peter Yang, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2024. Expires November 18, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6214. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610838

The following person(s) doing business as: GMB Business Services, 1822 El Prado Drive, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gwyn M. Bailey, 1822 El Prado Drive, 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/: Gwyn M. Bailey, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 25, 2024. Expires November 24, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6215. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610780

The following person(s) doing business as: Elite Rehab Services, 960 Shorepoint CT, Unit 203, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sonal Pathak, 2101 Shoreline Drive, Unit 265, Alameda, CA 94501. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/20/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sonal Pathak, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 22, 2024. Expires November 21, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6216. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610779

The following person(s) doing business as: 131-133 Carlisle ST Condo Association, 2136 Vintage LN, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Raymond Schuder, 2136 Vintage LN, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/22/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Raymond Schuder, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 22, 2024. Expires November 21, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6217. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610786

The following person(s) doing business as: Eat Food Consulting, 2506 Eagle Ave, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Erika Thornton, 2506 Eagle Ave, Alameda, CA 94501. 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/: Erika Thornton, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 22, 2024. Expires November 21, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6218. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610983

The following person(s) doing business as: Be Still and Know Books by Julia Hallmark, 779 Hanover ST, Livermore, CA

94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Julia M. Hallmark, 779 Hanover ST, 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: 12/3/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Julia M. Hallmark, Sole Proprietor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2024. Expires December 2, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6219. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610968

The following person(s) doing business as: Third Lens Marketing, 5436 Ruth Ave, Oakland, CA 94601 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Third Lens LLC, 5436 Ruth Ave, Oakland, CA 94601. 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/: Jeff Rahn, Owner/Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2024. Expires December 2, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6220. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610963

The following person(s) doing business as: Mr. Plumbing, 7026 Koll Center Pkwy, #211, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mr. Plumbing LLC, 7026 Koll Center #211, Pleasanton, CA 94566. 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: 12/3/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Najib Rahmatti, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2024. Expires December 2, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6221. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 603449
The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). Zzan, 5333 Adeline ST, K23, Oakland, CA 94608. Registered by the following owner(s): Joy - JK Corporation, 643 Post ST, San Francisco, CA 94109. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 1/18/2024 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Corporation. Signature of Registrants: /s/ Sanglin Kim, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 18, 2024. The Independent, Legal No. 6222. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611083

The following person(s) doing business as: Beets Hospitality Group, 316 Stealth CT, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Beets Catering Inc, 316 Stealth CT, Livermore, CA 94551. 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: 10/20/2008. Signature of Registrant/s/: Read Phillips, Vice President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 9, 2024. Expires December 8, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6223. Published December 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611085

The following person(s) doing business as: Casa Real, 410 Vineyard Ave, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Beets Catering Inc, 316 Stealth CT, Livermore, CA 94551. 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: 02/08/2007. Signature of Registrant/s/: Read Phillips, Vice President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 9, 2024. Expires December 8, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6224. Published December 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611161

The following person(s) doing business as: Healing Needles, 2557 Mowry Ave, Suite 21, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Di Kang, 2557 Mowry Ave, Suite 21, Fremont, CA 94538. 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: 6/7/2019. Signature of Registrant/s/: Di Kang, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 12, 2024. Expires December 11, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6225. Published December 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610714

The following person(s) doing business as: Rice N' Spice Indian Supermarket, 1522 Holmes ST, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Varaha Solutions LLC, 237 Stickle DR, 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/: Sreenivasa Rao Mutte, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2024. Expires November 18, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6226. Published December 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610899

The following person(s) doing business as: Pain Medicine Consultants, a Division of BASS Medical Group, 2324 Santa Rita RD, Suite 6, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): BASS Medical Group, 2637 Shadelands DR, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. 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: 10/23/24. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rajiv Nagesetty, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 27, 2024. Expires November 26, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6227. Published December 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 569626

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s): Bridge Tower Insurance Services, 6200 Stoneridge Mall Rd, Suite #300, Pleasanton, CA 94588. Registered by the following owner(s): Sallie R. Witt, 719 Travis Circle, Livermore, CA 94550. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 3/16/2020 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Individual. Signature of Registrants: /s/ Sallie R. Witt, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 5, 2024. The Independent, Legal No. 6228. Published December 12, 19, 26, 2024, January 2, 2025.

Notice is hereby given that this is an Online Bid Process; only bids submitted through the online portal will be accepted. Please login or register at https://ezsourcing.acgov.org/. RFQ #902552 Hazardous Waste Disposal Services - Vendor Outreach: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 10:30AM To Attend Online: Join Microsoft Teams or Call-In (audio only): +1 415-915-3950 Conference ID: 504 517 635# Non-Mandatory Networking Bidders Conference: Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 1:00PM To Attend Online: Join Microsoft Teams - Meeting ID: 223 127 742 124 Passcode: v59KJ7XT or Call in (audio only): +1 415-915-3950 or (888) 715-8170 Phone Conference ID: 799 373 788# Response Due by 2:00PM on February 7, 2025 County Contact: Ning Peng at (510) 208-9636 or via email: ning.peng2@acgov.org. Specifications regarding the above may be obtained at the Alameda County GSA Current Contracting Opportunities Internet website at www.acgov.org. 12/26/24, CNS-3881042# The Independent, Legal No. 6229. Published December 26, 2024.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 24CV103572

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner:
Vincent Edward Vargas filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name:
Vincent Edward Vargas
Proposed Name:
Jerry Edward Vargas
THE COURT ORDERS
that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.

Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING Date:02/07/2025 Time: 9:00 AM Dept: 514

The address of the court is: **Superior Court of California County of Alameda Hayward Hall of Justice 24405 Amador Street Hayward, CA 94544**

A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: The Independent Newspaper 2250 First Street, Livermore, CA 94550 Dated: 12/17/2024 /s/: A. Thomas Nixon, Judge of the Superior Court The Independent, Legal No. 6230. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611218

The following person(s) doing business as: Palm Event Center, 1184 Vineyard Ave, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Beets Catering Inc, 316 Stealth CT, Livermore, CA 94551. 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: 10/20/2008. Signature of Registrant/s/: Read Phillips, Vice President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 16, 2024. Expires December 15, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6231. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611242

The following person(s) doing business as: JG Direct Auto Sales, 4047 First Street Suite 205, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the fol-

lowing owner(s): JG Direct Auto Sales, LLC, 4047 First Street Suite 205, 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/: Rodney Garcia, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 17, 2024. Expires December 16, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6232. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610806

The following person(s) doing business as: Viking Construction & Handyman Services, 19723 Center ST, Castro Valley, CA 94546 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jeffrey Eric Plamquist, 19723 Center ST, Castro Valley, CA 94546. 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/: Jeffrey Eric Plamquist, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 25, 2024. Expires November 24, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6233. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610723

The following person(s) doing business as: Fidelitas Law, 4695 Chabot Dr, Suite 200, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Kim Cameron-Smith, 538 Escondido Circle, 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/: Kim Cameron-Smith, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 20, 2024. Expires November 19, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6234. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611162

The following person(s) doing business as: Private Spaces,

3319 Harpers Ferry CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): 247 Energy Solutions, LLC, 3319 Harpers Ferry CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588. 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/: Athena Wong, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 12, 2024. Expires December 11, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6235. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 570502

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s): Private Spaces, 3319 Harpers Ferry CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588. Registered by the following owner(s): Euro Space USA, Inc., 3319 Harpers Ferry CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 5/20/2020 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Corporation. Signature of Registrants: /s/ Mark Denham, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 12, 2024. The Independent, Legal No. 6236. Published December 26, 2024, January 2, 9, 16, 2025.

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Local Muralist Provides Professional Opportunity for Youth Artists on City-Commissioned Project at Livermore Airport

By Christina Cavallaro

A wall mural project that explores climate action awareness and the future of air transport is currently underway and slated for permanent installation at the Livermore Municipal Airport in June of 2025. The 8-foot-by-32-foot artwork will cover the side of a hangar at the corner of East Jack London Boulevard and Discovery Drive.

It's part of a public art and youth community-art workshop project initiated and led by local artist and educator Thomasin Dewhurst, who has been involved in painting many of the murals around town, including the newest railroad mural in the parking lot of Tri-Valley Haven.

With the airport mural, Dewhurst said she was inspired to bring together both professional adult artists and youth artists after teaching and making her own art at the Bothwell Arts Center, where many Tri-Valley artists have studios. She was continually impressed by the strength of the art being produced there by adult and youth artists alike.

"The adults were working, and the students were working," Dewhurst said. "It was like being at university except better because you've got the younger people as well. It's such a lively arts community there."

On Thursday Dec. 14, a group of youth student painters gathered at the Bothwell in the late afternoon to pick up where they'd left off on

their work. The mural was being painted on 4-foot-by-8-foot panels made of a material called Dibond, an artist substrate often used by sign makers because they can be easily moved around.

Cole Gable, a student at Livermore High School, pointed to multiple sections on the panel he's been working on, including one section depicting a compact futuristic airplane.

"I was given, or 'gifted' almost, the plane, because nobody wanted it. I based it off a futuristic model. I don't know if it's come out yet," he said, referring to the research and development by ZeroAvia and companies like them developing hydrogen-powered aviation technology.

The mural is being

sponsored by the city, the airport, Gillig LLC, AVA Community Energy and the Lions Club of Livermore. It will depict airplanes, Gillig buses, Monarch Tractors, hydrogen-powered ferries in San Francisco Bay, wind turbines, solar panels and other vehicles that have innovations with ties to Livermore.

The students began work on the project last July of this year under the guidance of Caroline Powers Robinson, who has worked in Quest Science Center's youth summits. She helped organize the group in the beginning and Livermore Valley Arts showed its commitment to supporting the youth art project by offering Bothwell studio space to the student artists rent-free. Now the students work largely on their own under the tutelage of Dewhurst.

Inara Hepting, a recent graduate of Livermore's Vineyard Alternative School, explained the group's collaborative process for their two assigned panels.

"We all met up several times with a bunch of ideas that were all super different, but we landed on wanting to have something that would separate everything out a little bit," Hepting said. Since the students knew the mural would hang at the airport, they decided to create a panel to mimic a large window at the terminal gate. "That way we could have a bunch of different people waiting and the whole city behind." The scene will be created with two 4-foot-by-8-foot painted panels stacked vertically.

"I am an ambulatory wheelchair user with (myalgic) encephalomyelitis syndrome (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) and I have to use a wheelchair to get around for longer amounts of time," Hepting added. The syndrome is colloquially known as chronic fatigue syndrome.

She pointed to the girl in a wheelchair that she'd painted. "And I was bullied a lot for it in high school. That's how I ended up at Vineyard Alternative, because it wasn't really viable for me to be going to Granada like that, so I just wanted to put her in here to help normalize it more I guess."

Dewhurst said the panels are large enough that four artists can work side by side at the same time. "And that's

another community thing," she said, "how not to knock other people's paintbrushes out of their hands and into your thing."

For Granada High School seniors Jamie Yi and Katelyn D'Souza, working together is their preference. "We've been doing art together since freshman year," said Yi, whose contribution was an abstract pop of brightly colored flowers.

"We're kind of like the art people at our school I guess," D'Souza added. "I love working on group projects. It's been really fun. I like showing my stuff."

And finding a forum for showing off the work of the talent at the Bothwell was Dewhurst's main goal.

"I thought, 'We need to get them out there and shown off,'" Dewhurst said. "So basically, it's (the mural) an outdoor exhibition

of the youth artists and adult artists as well."

The students' work will be added to a series of other murals created by professional adult artists like Ghada Jamal and John Iacono, who worked together on panels depicting a future San Francisco Bay.

"I like teaching children," Dewhurst said about her workshops. "And with my projects I always want to include young people."



Inara Hepting, a recent graduate of Vineyard Alternative School, painted part of a departure lounge, inserting a girl in a wheelchair to reflect her own struggles with myalgic encephalomyelitis syndrome, also known as chronic fatigue. (Photo — Christina Cavallaro)



Livermore High School student Cole Gable painted a futuristic airplane as a symbol for the new innovations in aviation taking place at the airport. (Photo — Christina Cavallaro)

Beth Emek to Hold Shabbat Hanukkah Celebration

Congregation Beth Emek in Pleasanton will hold a Shabbat Hanukkah celebration in the synagogue, 3400 Nevada St., at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 27.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holi-

day that commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek army and the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in the second century B.C.E.

The traditional lighting of the Hanukkah menorah symbolizes the triumph of

light over darkness and good over evil.

Shabbat, or Jewish Sabbath, is observed every week from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.

Visitors are welcome to bring their own menorahs to light before the service begins.

For more information, call the synagogue at 925-931-1055, or go to bethemek.org.

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